

HISTORICAL MEMOIRS
OF THE
AUTHOR OF THE HENRIADE.
WITH
SOME ORIGINAL PIECES.

HISTORICAL MEMOIRS

OF THE

AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY

OF THE

COMMONWEALTH OF ENGLAND



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OF THE
AUTHOR OF THE HENRIADE.
WITH
SOME ORIGINAL PIECES.
TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
GENUINE LETTERS
OF
MR. DE VOLTAIRE,
TAKEN FROM HIS OWN MINUTES.
TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

D U B L I N :

Printed for R. MONCRIEFFE, No. 16, Capel-street.

M,DCC,LXXVII.

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DUBLIN

Printed by R. Wallace, No. 10, Queen's Street.

MCCCLXXV.



HISTORICAL

MEMOIRS, &c.

IN these Memoirs, the subject of which is a literary man, we shall endeavour to avoid every thing which may not in some degree tend to the advantage of letters, and particularly make it our care to advance nothing, except on the authority of original papers. No use shall be made of the almost innumerable satires and panegyrics which have been published, unless they are found to be supported by facts properly authenticated.

Some fix the birth of FRANCIS DE VOLTAIRE to the 20th of February, others to the 20th of November, 1694, and there are extant medals of him bearing each of these dates.

He has several times told us, that at his birth it was thought that he could not live, and that having been sprinkled by the midwife, the full ceremony of baptism was put off for several months.

Although I think nothing is more insipid than the details of infancy, and the time spent at schools, yet it ought to be mentioned, from the authority of his own writings, and the voice of

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the public, that at twelve years of age, having written some verses that appeared to be superior to what could have been expected so early in life, he was introduced to the celebrated Ninon de l' Enclos, by the Abbé Chateauneuf, her intimate friend, and that extraordinary woman bequeathed to him the sum of two thousand livres to buy books; which legacy was punctually paid.

The little piece in verse here alluded to, is probably that which he composed for an Invalid who had served in the regiment of Dauphiné, under the only son of Louis XIV. The old soldier had gone to the Jesuits College to entreat one of the Masters to oblige him, by writing a petition in verse, to be presented to the Dauphin. The master told him he was then too busy, but that there was a young scholar who could do him the favour he requested. Here follow the verses composed by the child.

Digne fils du plus grand des Rois,
 Son amour et notre esperance,
 Vous qui, sans régner sur la France,
 Régnés sur le cœur des François ;
 Souffrez-vous que ma vieille veine,
 Par un effort ambitieux,
 Ose vous donner une étrenne,
 Vous qui n'en recevez que de la main des Dieux ?
 On a dit qu'a votre naissance
 Mars vous donna la vaillance,
 Minerve la sagesse, Apollon la beauté :
 Mais un Dieu bienfaisant, que j'implore en mes peines,
 Voulut aussi me donner mes étrennes,
 En vous donnant la libéralité.

Which



Which may be thus paraphrased :

Illustrious offspring of the first of kings,
The Monarch's joy, the peoples future stay,
To whom each Frenchman's heart its tribute brings,
Tho' France to thee no regal honours pay.

Now chilling age has damp'd my generous fire,
Yet deign t'accept this gift without a frown,
This *martial* gift, which dares thus high aspire,
For thou receivest gifts from Heaven alone.

'Tis said, their choicest influence to dispense,
Around thy infant couch the powers combin'd:
Mars gave thee valour, and Minerva sense,
His lineaments divine, Apollo join'd.

One friendly power that oft has heard my woe,
Then deign'd to me a noble boon t'impart.
He gave your eyes with pitying tears to flow,
And to relieve distress, a generous heart.

This trifle of the young scholar put some Louisdor's into the pocket of the old invalid, and made a considerable noise both at Versailles and Paris; and 'tis probable that from that time the youth determined to follow his natural bent for Poetry. But we have heard from his own mouth, that he was principally, and indeed solely, engaged to addict himself entirely to the cultivation of the Belles-lettres, by the disgust he conceived against the method of teaching Jurisprudence in the law schools, to which his father (who was treasurer of the chamber of accounts) had sent him immediately after he left the Jesuits college.

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Notwithstanding his extreme youth, he was admitted to an intimacy with the Abbé Chauvieu, the Marquis de la Fare, the Duke of Sully, and the Abbé Courtin; and he has often told us that his father believed him entirely ruined, because he kept company with people of fashion, and made verses.

At the age of eighteen, he began the tragedy of Oedipus, in which he proposed to introduce choruses after the manner of the ancients.* The players were very unwilling to appear in a tragedy, the subject of which had been already treated by Corneille, whose performance was what is commonly called a *Stock Play*. It was not acted till 1718, and even then, not without an order from the court.

The young man, who was excessively dissipated and immersed in all the pleasures common at his time of life, was not sensible of the risque he run, nor did he give himself any trouble whether his piece succeeded nor not. He indulged himself in a thousand sallies on the stage, and at last wantonly laid hold of the train of the chief priest, in a scene where that pontiff was producing a very tragical effect. Marschal Villars's lady, who was in the first box, enquired who the young man was that had play'd that trick, as it seemed to be done with a view to ruin the piece; and being told that he was the

* We have a letter of the learned Dacier, dated 1713, in which he advises the author, who had then finished his piece, to add singing choruses, in imitation of the Greeks; but it was impracticable on the French stage.

the author, she sent for him into the box, and the attachment he formed from that time to the Mareschal and his lady, continued during their lives, as may be seen by a poetical epistle, which has been printed and begins :

D'aller goûter quelque repos
 Dans votre maison de plaisance ;
 Mais Vinache à ma confiance,
 Et j'ai donné la préférence,
 Sur le plus grand des Héros,
 Au plus grand Charlatan de France, &c. *

At Villars he was presented to the Duke of Richelieu, whose favour he acquired, and which has subsisted uninterruptedly for sixty years.

What is as singular, and a fact scarcely known, is, that the Prince of Conti, the father of him who gained so great reputation by the battles at the blockade of Demont and Chateau Dauphin, addressed some verses to him, which conclude thus :

We

" Ayant puisé ses vers aux eaux de l'Aganippe,
 " Pour son premier projet il fait le choix d'Œdipe,
 " Et quoique des longtems ce sujet fut connu,
 " Par un stile plus beau cette piece changée
 " Fit croire des Enfers Racine revenu,
 " Ou que Corneille avait la sienne corrigée."

From Aganippe's source, his strains he drew,
 Then brought old Oedipus again to view,
 A theme well known—yet such correctness shines,
 Such easy grace adorns his polish'd lines ;

We

* *Vide* the translation of Voltaire's works.

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We think Racine has left the shades below,
Or Corneille's rugged numbers learnt to flow.

We have not been able to find the answer of the author of Oedipus. We asked him one day if he did not jestingly say to the Prince, " My Lord, you will be a great poet ; I must procure you a pension from the King ;" and whether, as is also pretended, he did not once put this question to his Highness at supper. Are we all princes ? or are we all poets ? He replied, *Delicta juventutis meæ ne memineris Domine. Remember not the sins of my youth, O Lord.*

After having finished his Oedipus ; but before it had been performed, he began the *Henriade*, when with Monsieur de Caumartin, Intendant of the Finances, at St. Ange.

We have oftner than once heard him say, that when he undertook these two performances, he did not imagine he should be able to finish them, and that he was neither acquainted with the rules of the drama, nor Epic poetry ; but that he was fired with what he heard of Henry IV. from Monsieur Caumartin, who was well versed in history, an excessive admirer of that Prince, and a gentleman of a most respectable character ; and that he began the work from meer enthusiasm, almost without reflection.

Having one day read several cantos of his poem when on a visit to his intimate friend, the young President de Maisons, he was so teased with objections, that he lost patience, and threw his manuscript into the fire. The president,

sident, Henaut, with difficulty rescued it. "Remember, said Mr. Henaut to him, in one of his letters, it was I that saved the *Henriade*, and that it cost me a handsome pair of ruffles."

Some years after, several copies of this poem were handed about, while it was only a sketch, and an edition of it with many chasms was published under the title of *The League*.

All the poets in Paris, and even many of the learned fell foul of him. Twenty pamphlets were let fly against him. The *Henriade* was play'd at the fair; and it was insinuated to the old Bishop of Frejus, Preceptor to the King, that it was indecent, and even criminal, to write in praise of Admiral Coligny and Queen Elizabeth.

The Cabal had interest enough to engage Cardinal de Bissi, then president of the assembly of the clergy, to pass a judicial censure upon the work; but this strange design proved abortive. The young author was filled with equal surprize and resentment at these intrigues. His dissipation prevented him from making friends among the literati; and he had not the art of combating his enemies with their own weapons, which is said to be absolutely necessary in Paris, if a man wishes to succeed in any kind of pursuit.

In 1722, he gave the tragedy of *Marriamne*. That Princess was poisoned by Herod. When she drank the cup, the faction cried

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cried out, *the Queen drinks*, and the piece was damned. *

These continual mortifications determined him to print the *Henriade* in England, as he could neither obtain privilege nor patronage for it in France. We have seen a letter in his own hand writing, to Mr. Dumas d'Aiguebère, since that time counsellor in the parliament of Tholouse, in which he speaks of that journey in the following manner :

Je ne dois pas être plus fortuné
Que le Héros célébré sur ma vielle :
Il fut proscrit, persécuté, damné
Par les devots & leur douce sequelle :
En Angleterre il trouva du secours,
J'en vais chercher. —————

If fortune frown, should I complain ?
The great have had their share of pain ;
Even he, the hero of my page,
Oft felt the malice of her rage ;
The victim of a bigot crew,
To England for relief he flew,
I'll seek that hospitable shore——

The rest of the Poem is torn off. It ended thus :

Je n'ai pas le nez tourné,
A être Prophète en mon pays.

At home a prophet is despis'd,
Howe'er in distant regions priz'd ;

My

* Probably this alluded to some report circulated at that time, which has not come to the knowledge of the translator, otherwise the expression could not have had such an effect.

My dear experience proves the point,
For here my nose is out of joint.

He was right; King George the First, and more particularly the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen of England, raised an immense subscription for him. Their liberality laid the foundation of his fortune: for on his return to France in 1728, he put his money into a lottery established by Mr. Desforts, Comptroller General of the Finances. The adventurers received a rent charge on the *Hotel-de-Ville* for their tickets; and the prizes were paid in ready money; so that if a society had taken all the tickets, it would have gained a million of livres. He joined with a numerous company of adventurers, and was fortunate. We were furnished with this anecdote by a member of the same society, who verified it by producing his registers. Mr. Voltaire wrote to him as follows: “To make a fortune in this country, nothing more is requisite than to read the arrears of the Council. It is seldom but the Ministry is obliged to make such arrangements in the Finances, as turn to the advantage of individuals.”

This change of circumstances did not weaken his ruling passion for the cultivation of the Belles-lettres. In the year 1730, he gave his *Brutus*, which we look upon to be his most spirited tragedy, not even excepting *Mahomet*. It was violently criticised.

We were present at the first representation of *Zara*, in 1731, and although it drew tears

from a great part of the audience, it narrowly escaped being damned. It was parodied at the Italian comedy and the fair, and got the name of the Foundling, and Harlequin on Parnassus.

About that time one of the Academicians having proposed Mr. Voltaire to fill a vacancy, of which he did not entertain the least thought, Mr. de Boze declared that the author of Brutus and Zara could never deserve a place in that society.

He was then intimately acquainted with the illustrious Marchioness of Chatellet, with whom he studied the principles of Newton, and the systems of Leibnitz. They retired to Cirey, in Champagne, for several years, two of which Mr. Kænig, an eminent mathematician, passed with them. Mr. Voltaire cause a gallery to be erected, where they performed all the experiments on light and electricity.

Notwithstanding these employments, on the 27th of January, 1736, he brought out his tragedy of Alzira, or the Americans, which met with great applause. He ascribed his success to his absence, saying, *laudantur ubi non sunt, sed non cruciantur ubi sunt.*

The most virulent censurer of Alzira, was the Ex-Jesuit Desfontaines.—That affair was attended with some uncommon circumstances.—Desfontaines had been employed in the *Journal des Savans*, under the direction of the Abbé Bignon, from which he had been dismissed in 1723. He then set up a kind of Journal of his own,

own, and was what Mr. de Voltaire calls *un Folliculaire* (a venom spitter). His character was well known.—He had been taken in the fact with some Savoyard boys, and imprisoned in the *Biffetre*. His indictment was begun to be drawn up, and it was intended to burn him alive, as it was said Paris stood in need of an example. Mr. de Voltaire prevailed upon the Marchioness de Prie to use her interest in the criminal's favour.* There is still extant one of the letters written by Desfontaines to his deliverer; it has been printed among those of the Marquis d'Argens Deguille, page 228, Vol. I. “ I shall never forget the obligations I lie
 “ under to you: the goodness of your heart is
 “ still superior to your genius. I ought to em-
 “ ploy my life in giving you proofs of my gra-
 “ titude. I conjure you likewise to obtain for
 “ me a revocation of the *Lettre de Cachet*, by
 “ which I am delivered from the *Biffetre*, and
 “ banished thirty leagues from Paris.”

In a fortnight after, this same man wrote a defamatory libel against the person in whose service he ought to have employed his life.—This fact is authenticated by a letter of Mr. Tiriot's, dated the 16th August, and taken from the same collection.—This Abbé Desfontaines is the person who, in a conversation with the Count d'Argenson, attempted to vindicate himself by saying, *I must live*, to which the Count replied, *I see no necessity for it*.

After

* This letter was the 31st May: the date of the year is not affixed, but it was written in 1724,

After the affair of the *Biffetre*, this Priest desisted from paying his addressees to chimney sweepers. He bred up some young Frenchmen to his double trade of non-conformist and *Folliculaire*; he taught them the art of writing satires, and in conjunction with them composed a number of defamatory libels, under the title of *Voltairemania* & *Voltaïriana*.—They were a farrago of absurd stories. An estimate of them may be formed from a letter signed by the Duke de Richelieu, the original of which we have recovered. Here follows his own words. “ That
 “ book is very dull and very ridiculous. What
 “ seems to me most extraordinary is, his asser-
 “ tion that the Duchess de Richelieu gave you
 “ a hundred Louisdor’s and a coach, with some
 “ circumstances unworthy of you, however wor-
 “ thy of the author, for this excellent fellow
 “ forgets that I was then a widower, and did
 “ not marry again till fifteen years after, &c.
 “ signed, the Duke de Richelieu,” 1739.

Mr. Voltaire made no use of so many authentic testimonies; and they would have been of no service to his memory if we had not recovered them, with great difficulty, in the chaos of his papers.

We likewise lighted on a letter from the Marquis d’Argenson, who was Minister for Foreign Affairs: “ He is a villainous fellow,
 “ this Abbé Desfontaines, says he, his ingra-
 “ titude is still blacker than those crimes, the
 “ commission of which gave you an opportuni-
 “ ty of laying him under an obligation.” 7th February, 1739.

Such

Such were the people with whom Mr. de Voltaire had to do, and whom he called *the rascallity of literature: they live*, said he, *upon pamphlets and foul deeds.*

We likewise find a man of the same stamp who went by the name of M'Carty, giving himself out to be one of the noble family of the M'Carty's in Ireland, and assumed the character of a man of letters. He borrowed a considerable sum from Mr. de Voltaire, with which he went off to Constantinople and turned Mahometan; upon which our author said, *M'Carty is only gone to Bosphorus, but Desfontaines is gone farther—he has fled to the lake of Sodom.**

It appeared that the opposition, malice, and abuse, which he met with at the representation of every new piece, could not make him desist from indulging his taste; for on the 10th of October that same year, he produced his Comedy of *The Prodigal Son*, though not under his own name; and he gave the profits to Messrs. Linant and Lamarre, two young pupils, whom he had formed, and who came to Cirey while he resided with Madam de Chatellet. He appointed Linant Preceptor to that Lady's son, who has since been Lieutenant General of the army, and Ambassador at the Courts of Vienna and London.

The

* We have seen in the hands of the Notary, Perret, a bond for five hundred livres, but we could not find the other of two thousand.

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The Comedy of The Prodigal Son had great success. The author wrote to Mademoiselle Quinaut, "You can keep other people's secrets, as well as your own. Had I been known to be the author, the piece would have been damned. Men cannot bear that the same person should succeed in two kinds of writing. I made enemies enough by my Oedipus and Henriade."

However at that time he commenced a study of a very different nature. He wrote *the Elements of the Newtonian Philosophy*, a philosophy then scarce known in France. He could not obtain a privilege from the Chancellor Aguesseau, who was a man of universal learning, but being bred a Cartesian, discouraged the new discoveries as much as he could. Our author's attachment to the principles of Newton and Locke, drew upon him a new crowd of enemies. He wrote to Mr. Falkner, to whom he dedicated his *Zara*. "It is believed that the French love novelty, but it must be in cookery and fashions, for as to new truths they are always proscribed among us; it is only when they grow old that they are well received."

We have recovered a letter which he wrote a long time after to Mr. Clairaut on these abstract sciences; as it seems worth preserving, the reader will find it in its proper place in this collection.

By way of relaxation from his studies in Natural Philosophy, he amused himself in writing his

his *Maid of Orleans*. We have proofs that this piece of drollery was composed almost entirely at Cirey. Madame de Chatellet loved Poetry as much as Geometry, and was a very good judge of it. Although this Poem was only comic, yet there is much more fancy in it than in the *Henriade*; but it was vilely disgraced by some shameless scoundrels, who printed it with horrid lewdnesses. The only good editions are those of Geneva.

He was obliged to go to Brussels to solicit a suit which the family of Chatellet had for a long time maintained against the House of Honfrouk, a suit which might have ruined both families. Mr. Voltaire, jointly with Mr. Raesfeld, President of Cleves, accommodated this old dispute, on condition of a hundred and thirty thousand French livres being paid to the Marquis de Chatellet.

The celebrated and unfortunate Rousseau was then at Brussels. Madame de Chatellet refused to see him, because she knew that Rousseau, when a domestic of her father, the Baron de Breteuil, had written a satire against that nobleman, of which we have proof in a paper entirely written with Madame de Chatellet's own hand.

The two Poets had an interview, and soon conceived a strong aversion from each other. Rousseau having shewn his antagonist a lyric epistle addressed to posterity, met with this repartee: *my friend, this letter will never be delivered according to its direction.* Rousseau never gave

gave this piece of railery. There is extant a letter from Mr. de Voltaire to Mr. Linant, containing the following passage: "Rousseau despises me because I am careless in my rhimes, and I despise Rousseau because he is only a rhimer." *

The

* We observe by a letter of a Mr. de Médin, to a Mr. de Messe, of the 17th February, 1737, that the Poet Rousseau had not corrected his morals at Brussels; we here give it our readers. "You will be surprised at my misfortune—some of my bills have been protested and returned:—on Tuesday night I was arrested and thrown into jail. Would you believe it, that rascal Rousseau, that scoundrel, that monster, who, for six months past never eat or drank, except at my table, to whom I have done numberless services of the greatest importance, was the cause of my being arrested? He irritated the holder of the bills against me, and at last this monster, this offspring of Satan, after drinking with me at my table, || kissing and embracing me, served as a spy to the officers, who dragged me out of my house at midnight. Never was villainy so black; I cannot reflect upon it without horror.——If you knew all that I have done for him!——Patience!——I hope this accident will make no alteration in our friendship.——What a difference between that hypocrite and Mr. de Voltaire, who has honoured me with his friendship and assistance!"

It must be acknowledged that such an action tends greatly to vindicate Saurin, as well as the sentence

and

|| The Reader cannot but recollect the same fulsome behaviour of Rousseau to his benefactor the late David Hume, and that too when he had formed a scheme for blasting his friend's reputation.

The uncommon regard with which the King of Prussia had been pleased to honour him, soon made him forget Rousseau's enmity. That Monarch was likewise a poet; but he possessed all the talents of a Prince, with many others which are seldom found in that rank. While he was Hereditary Prince Royal, a regular correspondence had been long carried on between him and our author. Some of their letters have been printed in the collection of Voltaire's works. *

This

and decree by which Rousseau was banished: but let us not dive into the depths of an affair so horrid and so disgraceful.

* Perhaps the reader will not be displeased to see the commencement of this correspondence dated the 8th of August, 1736.

" Though I have not the satisfaction of your personal acquaintance, you are well known to me by your works. If you will allow me the expression, they are treasures of wit, pieces wrought with such exquisite taste, that every perusal discovers new beauties. I fancy that in them I can trace the character of their ingenious author, who does honour to human nature.

" Should ever the dispute concerning the superiority of the ancients be renewed, the great men of modern times will one day be obliged to you, and you only, for turning the balance in their favour.

" To an excellent poetical genius you add a fund of varied knowledge, which, in truth, has some affinity with poesy, but never was appropriated to it, except by your pen. Never before did poet reduce metaphysical thoughts to cadence; that honour was reserved

This Prince had just finished visiting his frontiers, after his accession to the Crown, and a desire

reserved for Mr. de Voltaire. The taste for philosophy displayed in your writings, has induced me to send you the accusation and defence of Mr. Wolff, which has been translated by my direction. That gentleman, the most celebrated Philosopher of our age, has thrown light upon the darkest parts of metaphysics, and because he has treated those difficult subjects in a manner equally sublime, exact, and elegant, he is cruelly accused of Atheism. Such is the destiny of great men, their superior genius is always exposed to the envenomed shafts of calumny and envy.

“ I have given orders for the translation of another work, by the same author, entitled *A Treatise of God, the Soul, and the World*. I shall send it to you as soon as it is finished, and I have not the least doubt that you will be struck by the strong evidence of each of his propositions, which follow in geometrical order, and are connected like the links of a chain.

“ The kindest and support you shew yourself ready to bestow on all who devote themselves to the arts and sciences, make me hope that you will not exclude me from the number of those you think worthy of your instructions. I call your correspondence by that name, which cannot fail of being profitable to every thinking being. I even dare affirm, without derogating from the merit of any man, that there is scarce an individual in the universe, who might not, with justice, own you to be his master. Without lavishing incense unworthy of being offered to you, I can safely say that your works abound with numberless beauties. Your *Henriade* charms me, and happily triumphs over the injudicious *critique* by which it has been attacked. Your tragedy of *Cæsar* presents

a desire of seeing the French troops, and of travelling incognito to Strasburg and Paris, induced

us with a set of characters well supported. The sentiments are uniformly grand and sublime, we feel that Brutus is either a *Roman* or an *Englishman*.

“ To the graces of novelty, *Alcira* joins a happy contrast between the Savage and European manners. In the character of *Gusman*, you shew, that Christianity, ill understood, and under the guidance of mistaken zeal, inspires the heart with more barbarous ferocity than Paganism itself. *Corneille*, the great *Corneille*, who attracted the universal admiration of his age, were he to rise from the dead in our days, would behold with wonder, and perhaps not without a mixture of envy, the Goddess lavish those favours upon you, which she bestowed on him with a sparing hand;—what may not be expected from the author of so many master pieces! What new wonders will not flow from that pen, which formerly, with such wit and elegance, traced out *the Temple of Taste*!

“ This makes me so ardently desire the possession of all your works. I entreat you, Sir, to send them; and to communicate the whole without reserve. Should there be any manuscript, that by a necessary circumspection you may think proper to keep from the public eye, I promise to conceal it in the bosom of secrecy, and content myself with admiring it in private. Unhappily, I am sensible, that in our days, no great trust is reposed in the faith of Princes; however I hope you will not suffer yourself to be misled by general prejudices, but make an exception to the rule in my favour.

“ I should think myself richer in the possession of your works, than if I were master of all the perishing
and

duced him to undertake a journey to the first of those places, under the name of the Count du

and contemptible gifts of fortune, which the same blind chance confers and takes away.

“ Your works may be made our own by the help of memory, and till that fails they will remain.—Sensible of the small extent of mine, I balance a long time before I determine what deserves a place in it.

“ If poesy was still upon the former footing ;—if its writers could only trill tiresome Idylls, Eclogues cast in an unvaried mould, insipid Stanzas, or at most, could only tune their lyre to Elegiac notes, I would renounce it for ever ; but in your hand the art is ennobled ; you have pointed out to us new paths, and traced a route unknown to *** and ***.

“ Your performances command respect, they deserve to be admired and studied by men of sense and taste. They form a compleat system of morals, by which the world may learn to think and to act.—Virtue is painted in the most amiable colours.—The idea of true glory is fixed, and a taste for the sciences inspired in a manner so refined and delicate, that whoever reads your works must feel an ambition to imitate them.—How often have I said to myself, *Attempt not a burthen too heavy for your strength, Voltaire can be imitated only by a Voltaire!* Those are the moments in which I feel how vain and empty are the advantages of birth ; those sounds, the marks of distinctions foreign to ourselves, and only ornamental to the outside.—How preferable to those are the talents of genius !

“ What do we not owe to those men whom nature distinguished at their formation ; whom she delighted to furnish with a capacity necessary to make a proficiency in the arts, and whose vigils it is the duty

du Four, but being known by a soldier who had served in his father's army, he returned to Cleves.

Several curious persons have preserved in their collections, a letter in verse and prose, after the manner of Chapelle, written by that Prince on the subject of his journey to Strasbourg. The study of the French language and poetry, Italian music, philosophy and history, had been his consolation during the hard treatment he met with in the earlier part of his life.

That letter is a remarkable monument of a man who has since gained so many battles. It is written with elegance and ease. Here follow some passages of it.

" I am just returned from a journey, where
 " I have met with several singular adventures,
 " some disagreeable, but many of the pleasing
 " kind.

" You

duty of Princes to recompence? Ah! why cannot I be the glorious instrument of crowning your success? I should only be apprehensive that this rude climate could not furnish so many laurels as your works deserve. Should destiny be so unfavourable as to deny me the happiness of making you my own, at least may I hope one day to see the man whom I have so long admired at a distance, and to assure you in person, that with all the esteem and consideration due to those, who, guided by the light of truth, consecrate their labours to the public utility,

" I am, &c."

" You know that I set out for Brussels, in or-
 " der to pay a visit to a sister for whom I en-
 " tertain an equal affection and esteem.—On
 " the road, Algarotti and I consulted the map
 " in order to settle our return by the Wesel.—
 " Strasbourg was not much out of our way,
 " and in preference we made choice of that
 " route. 'Twas resolved to travel incogni-
 " to;—at last every thing being arranged and
 " concerted in the best method possible we
 " reckoned upon reaching Strasbourg in three
 " days.

" Mais le ciel qui de tout dispose
 " Regla differemment la chose.
 " Avec des coursiers effrangés
 " En droite ligne issus de Rossinanté,
 " Des payfans en postillons masqués,
 " Nos carosses cent fois dans la route accrochés,
 " Nous allions gravement d'une allure indolente,
 " &c."

But Heaven, whose high despotic sway,
 Disposes all—had barr'd our way.
 Coursers, which by their wind and speed,
 Seem'd of the true la Mancha breed;
 Postillions taken from the plough,
 Our coaches sunk in every slough;
 With gentle peace along we trudg'd, &c."

'Tis said that scarce a day passed in which he
 did not write some of these agreeable letters,
 which were the extempore effusions of his pen.
 But he had just finished a work of a nature
 more serious and more worthy of a great Prince;
 it was a refutation of Machiavel. He had sent
 it for publication to Voltaire, whom he appoint-
 ed to meet him at Meuse, a small castle near
 Cleves;

Cleves;—when they met our author, paid him the following compliment: “Sire, had I been
 “Machiavel, and been permitted to have ac-
 “cess to a young King, my first advice to
 “him would have been, to answer my
 “works.”

From that time the King of Prussia redoubled his favours to M. de Voltaire, who in the year 1740, went to pay his court at Berlin before the King was prepared for invading Silesia.

At that time Cardinal Fleury used every art of flattery to cajole him: however, our traveller does not appear to have fallen into the snare.—We shall here present our readers with a very singular anecdote, which may throw great light on the history of the present century. On the 14th of November, 1740, the Cardinal wrote a long offensive letter, of which we have a copy, containing the following words:

“Corruption is so general, sincerity and
 “faith so shamefully banished from every
 “heart in this unhappy age, that if we do
 “not keep ourselves steady in the superior mo-
 “tives which oblige us not to depart from
 “*them*, we should be sometimes tempted to
 “fail in them on certain occasions. But the
 “King, my master, shews at least that he
 “does not imagine himself entitled to *have*
 “such sort of *reprisals*; and the moment of
 “the Emperor’s death, he assured the Prince
 “of

“ of Lichtenstein, that he would faithfully keep
 “ all his engagements.”

It is not our province to examine how it was possible, after such a letter, to form an enterprize, in 1741, for stripping the daughter and heiress of Charles the Sixth of her paternal dominions. Either Cardinal Fleury changed his opinion, or that war was entered into against his inclination. This work has no connection with politics, to which we are absolute strangers; but as literary men, we cannot conceal our surprize, that a courtier and member of the academy should make use of such phrases as,—if we don't keep ourselves steady in the *motives* which oblige us not to depart from *these motives*;—that we would be tempted to fail in *those motives*, and that a man is justly entitled to *have* such sort of reprisals. What a number of errors in stile within the compass of a few words!

However, it plainly appears that our author had no design to make his fortune by politics; for on his return to Brussels, he dedicated himself entirely to his beloved Belles-lettres. There he composed the tragedy of Mahomet, and soon after went with Madame de Chatellet to get it represented at Lisle, where there was a very good company, under the management of Mr. Lanoue, an author and actor. The famous Mademoiselle Clairon play'd there, and at that early period gave specimens of her great theatrical talents.

Mr. Denis, commissary at war, and captain in the regiment of Champagne, had married

our author's niece, who lived in great splendor at Lisle, that place being within her husband's department.—Madame de Chatellet resided in her house;—we were spectators of all these diversions, and Mahomet was extremely well play'd.

Between the acts, the author received a letter from the King of Prussia, acquainting him with the victory at Molwitz: he read it to the audience, who received the news with a general clap. “*You will see (said he) that this piece of Molwitz will insure success to mine.*”

It was play'd the 19th of August the same year. Upon that occasion appeared stronger proofs than ever of the success to which literary jealousy may be carried, especially in theatrical matters. The Abbé Desfontaines, and one Bonneval, whom M. de Voltaire had relieved in his necessities, not being able to prevent the piece from succeeding upon the stage, lodged an information against it before the attorney general, as containing some things contrary to the christian religion. Things went so far, that Cardinal Fleury advised the author to withdraw his performance. This advice was equivalent to a command; however, the author published his play, with a dedication to Benedict XIV. (Lambertini) who had already shewn him particular marks of regard. He had been recommended to this Pope by Cardinal Passionei, a man distinguished in the literary world, and with whom he had long maintained a correspondence. We have some of that Pope's letters to M. de Voltaire. His

Holinefs was defirous of drawing him to Rome, and he has always expreffed a regret for not having feen that city, which he ufed to call the capital of Europe.

Mahomet was not play'd again till long after, when it was revived by the credit of Madame Denis, notwithstanding the efforts of Crebillon, then licenfer of theatrical pieces, under the direction of the Lieutenant of the Police. It was found neceffary to appoint M. d'Alembert licenfer. This procedure of Crebillon was highly difapproved by people of fafhion. The piece has continued in poffeffion of the theatre, even when that fpecies of entertainment has been moft neglected. The author acknowledged that he was forry for having painted Mahomet in more odious colours than he deferved. But had I only made him a hero and politician, writes he to one of his friends, the piece would have been damned. Great paffions and great crimes are indifpenfable requifites in a tragedy. Some lines after he adds, the *genus implacabile vatum*, perfecutes me more violently than Mahomet was perfecuted at Mecca. People talk of jealousies and intrigues disturbing courts, but they abound more among men of letters.

After all thefe fquabbles, Meffrs. de Reaumur and de Mairan advifed him to renounce poetry, which only expofed him to envy and vexation; to addict himfelf entirely to natural philofophy, and to folicit a feat in the Academy of Sciences, as he already had one in the Royal Society at London, and in the Inftituti-
on

on of Boulogne. But M. de Fourmont, his friend, a man of letters, and of a most amiable character, having exhorted him in a poetical epistle not to bury his talent, he wrote the following reply :

A mon très cher ami Fourmont,
Demeurant sur le double-mont,
Au-dessus de Vincent Voiture,
Vers la taverne où Bachaumont
Buvait et chantait sans mesure,
Où le plaisir & la raison
Ramenaient le tems d'Epicure.

Vous voulez donc que des filets
De l'abstraite Philosophie
Je revole au brillant palais
De l'agréable Poësie,
Au pays où regnent Thalie
Et le cothurne & les sifflets.

Mon ami, je vous remercie
D'un conseil si doux & si sain.
Vous le voulez ; je cède enfin
A ce conseil, à mon destin ;
Je vais de folie en folie,
Ainsi qu'on voit une Catin
Passer du Guerrier au Robin,
Au gras Prieur d'une Abbaye
Au Courtisan, au Citadin :

Ou bien, si vous voulez encore,
Ainsi qu'une abeille au matin
Va succher les pleurs de l'aurore
Ou sur l'absinte ou sur le thin ;
Toujours travaille & toujours cause ;
Et vous paitrit son miel divin,
Des gratte-cus & de la rose.

Which is thus imitated :

To Fourmont, friend, I hold most dear,
Who lives upon the forked hill;
Above Voiture's, that tavern near
Where Bachaumont was wont to swill,
And stretch'd in careless ease along,
Maudlin pour'd th' unmeasur'd song.
Where of yore join'd hand in hand,
Sober reason, sprightly pleasure,
Lightly trip'd in frolic measure,
And Epicurus led the band.

" Quit that thorny road, you say,
" Quit Philosophy's dark gloom,
" Resume the long forsaken way,
" Where Poesy's sweet flow'rets bloom,
" Melpomene with sober air,
" And sportive Thalia wait you there.
" Nor dread the surly Critics frown,
" Whose only talent is to rail,
" Your merits weigh'd in even scale,
" You'll grow the fav'rite of the town.
" Throw off the philosophic frock,
" Put on the buskin or the sock."

My friend, I'll do what you advise,
Your counsel seems right, sound, and wise,
Besides, it suits my inclination,
So I'll resume my occupation.
Adieu then to these barren shades,
Welcome again, ye charming maids.
Fate will'd I should be ever changing,
From folly still to folly ranging.
So easy Phillis will admit
Th' embroider'd courtier, or plain cit,
The humble clerk, the lordly rector,
The peaceful quaker, bullying hector,
By turns she hugs them in her arms,
Each has for Her, resistless charms.

Or,

Or, if you choose a different strain,
So when Aurora gilds the plain,
Forth flies the bee to suck her sweets,
And settles on each herb she meets;
Unwearied plies her nimble wings,
Incessant works, incessant sings;
Eager t'increase her honey'd store,
Or from the weed, or from the flower.

And immediately he begun his *Merope*. The tragedy of *Merope* is the first piece, not upon a sacred subject, that succeeded without the aid of an amorous passion, and which procured our author more honour than he hoped from it, was play'd on the 26th of February, 1743. We cannot better describe the singular circumstances attending it's reception, than by inserting his letter of the 4th of April following, to his friend Mr. L'Aiguebere, then at Tholouse.

“ *Merope* is not yet printed, I am afraid
“ it will not succeed so well in the closet as
“ on the stage.—The piece is not mine; it is
“ Mademoiselle Dumenil's.—What think you
“ of an actress that kept the audience in tears
“ through three successive acts?—The public
“ have run into a little mistake, and given me
“ credit for a part of the extreme pleasure giv-
“ en them by the actors. The seduction was
“ so great, that the pit, with loud shouts, in-
“ sisted upon seeing me.* I was seized in the
“ hiding place, where I had squatted for shel-
ter,

* Hence the ridiculous custom of crying “ the au-
thor,” the author,” when a piece, whether good
or bad, succeeds the first night.

“ter, and brought by force into the box of
 “ Marshal Villars’s lady, who was there with
 “ her daughter-in law.—The pit was mad;
 “ they called out to the Dutcheſs de Villars to
 “ kiſs me, and they made ſo much noiſe, that
 “ ſhe was obliged to comply by order of her
 “ mother-in-law.—Thus have I been kiſſed in
 “ public, as was Alain Chartier, by the Prin-
 “ ceſs Margaret of Scotland; but he was
 “ aſleep, and I was wide awake. This tide
 “ of popular favour, which probably will ſoon
 “ ebb, has a little conſoled me for the petty
 “ perſecution I have ſuſtained from Boyer, the
 “ old Biſhop of Mirepoix, who is ſtill more a
 “ Theatin than a Biſhop. The Academy, the
 “ King, and the Public, deſtined me to ſuc-
 “ ceed Cardinal Fleury, as one of the forty.*
 “ Boyer was againſt it; and at laſt, after ten
 “ weeks ſearch, he has found a Prelate to fill
 “ the place of a Prelate, in conformity to the
 “ Eccleſiaſtical Canons. † I have not the ho-
 “ nour of the Prieſthood; I ſuppoſe it is pro-
 “ per for a *profane* perſon as I am, to give up
 “ all thoughts of the Academy.

“ Letters are not much favoured. The
 “ Theatin has told me that eloquence is ex-
 “ piring; that he endeavoured in vain to *refuſ-*
 “ *citate* it by his ſermons, but that nobody had
 “ *ſeconded* him; he meant nobody had *liſtened*
 “ to him.

“ The

* The Academy conſiſts of forty members.

† By a letter dated the 3d of March, 1743, from
 the Archbiſhop of Narbonne, it appears that that
 Prelate gave up his pretenſions in favour of M. de
 Voltaire.

“ The Abbé Langlet is just imprisoned in
 “ the Bastile for having written a book of me-
 “ moirs, already well known, serving for a
 “ supplement to the history of our celebrated
 “ de Thou. The indefatigable and unhappy
 “ Langlet did a signal service to all who wish-
 “ ed well to their country, and to the lovers
 “ of historical researches. He deserved a re-
 “ compence, and at the age of sixty-eight he
 “ has been cruelly thrown into prison. ’Tis
 “ tyrannical.

Inferè nunc Melibæe piros pone ordine vites.

“ Madame de Chatellet desires her compli-
 “ ments.—She marries her daughter to the
 “ Duke de Montenero, a dwarfish, thin-faced,
 “ swarthy, flat-chested, high-nosed, Neapoli-
 “ tan.—He is now here, and is going to rob
 “ us of a jolly plump-cheeked French girl.—
 “ *Vale et me ama.*”

V

Soon after we see him again taking a jour-
 ney to the King of Prussia, who was always
 inviting him to Berlin, but could never prevail
 on him to quit his old friends for any consider-
 able time. In this journey he performed a sin-
 gular service to the King his master, as we see
 by the letters which passed between him and
 Mr. Amelot, the Minister of State. But these
 particulars come not within our present de-
 sign.—We view him only in his literary cha-
 racter.

At

At this time the famous Count de Bonneval, whom he had formerly seen at the house of the Grand Prior de Vendome, and was become a Turkish Pacha, wrote to him from Constantinople, and their correspondence continued some time, but nothing of it has been recovered except a single fragment which we shall transcribe.

“ I am the first saint that was ever given
 “ up to the discretion of Prince Eugene. I
 “ was sensible, that by submitting to circum-
 “ cision, I should expose myself to a kind of
 “ ridicule; but I was soon assured that I should
 “ be excused from undergoing that operation,
 “ on account of my advanced age; but I was
 “ still with-held by the ridicule of changing
 “ my religion. It is true that I have always
 “ thought it a matter of indifference to the
 “ deity, whether a man was Mahometan,
 “ Christian, Jew, or Guebre: on that sub-
 “ ject I have always maintained the same sen-
 “ timents with the Regent Duke of Orleans,
 “ my dear friend the Marquis de la Farre, the
 “ Abbé Chaulieu, and all the men of sense
 “ and honour with whom I have passed my
 “ life. I know that Prince Eugene thought
 “ as I did, and that he would have done the
 “ same thing in my situation. In a word, I
 “ was reduced to the alternative of losing my
 “ head, or covering it with a turban. I com-
 “ municated my perplexity in confidence to
 “ Lamira, a domestic of mine, my interpreter,
 “ whom you have since that time seen in
 “ France with *Said Effendi*. This man brought
 “ me an *Iman*, who possessed a fund of know-
 “ ledge

“ ledge superior to the generality of his coun-
 “ trymen. Lamira presented me to him as a
 “ Catechumen, whose faith was very waver-
 “ ing. Hear what this good Ptiest dictated to
 “ him in my presence;—Lamira translated it
 “ into French;—I shall preserve it while I
 “ live. “ Our religion is indisputably the most
 “ antient and the purest in the known world :
 “ ’tis the religion of Abraham, unsophisticated
 “ by the least mixture, and this is confirmed
 “ by our holy Koran, where it is said, *Abra-*
 “ *ham was a true believer ; he was neither Jew,*
 “ *Christian, nor Idolater.* Like him, we be-
 “ lieve in only one God, like him we are
 “ circumcised, and we regard Mecca as a ho-
 “ ly city, only because it was revered as
 “ such even in the time of Ismael, son of Abra-
 “ ham.

“ God hath certainly poured his blessings
 “ on the race of Ismael, for his religion has
 “ spread over the greatest part of Asia and
 “ Africa ; and the race of Isaac has not been
 “ able to preserve an inch of ground in either
 “ of them.

“ It is true, that our religion is perhaps
 “ somewhat mortifying to the flesh ; Maho-
 “ met has repressed the licence in which all
 “ the Asiatic Princes indulged themselves ;—
 “ that of having an undeterminate number of
 “ wives. The Princes of the abominable sect
 “ of the Jews had carried this licence farther
 “ than any other : David had eighteen wives ;
 “ Solomon, according to the Jews, had seven
 “ hundred,

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“ hundred, but our Prophet reduced the number to four.

“ He has forbidden the use of wine and strong liquors, because they disorder both body and soul, occasion diseases and quarrels, and because it is much more easy to abstain from them entirely, than to keep within bounds.

“ But what renders our religion holy and excellent, is its being the only one which makes alms-giving an essential duty. Other religions recommend charity, but we expressly command it, under pain of eternal damnation.

“ Our religion is likewise the only one which forbids games of chance, and under the same penalties, which proves the profound wisdom of Mahomet. He knew that gaming rendered men incapable of applying to business, and but too often transformed society into assemblies of dupes and knaves.

In this place there are several blasphemous lines which we dare not copy. They may be pardonable in a Turk, but a Christian cannot transcribe them.

“ If this Christian has a mind to abjure his idolatrous sect, and embrace that of the victorious Musselmén, he has only to pronounce our holy formulary in my presence, to repeat the prayers, and perform the ablutions which are ordained.

“ Lamira

“ Lamira having read this writing to me,
 “ he said, Monsieur, the Count, these Turks
 “ are not such fools as they are believed to be
 “ at Vienna, Rome, and Paris.—I replied,
 “ that I felt an inward impulse of Turkish
 “ grace, which consisted in the firm hope,
 “ that I should attack Prince Eugene when I
 “ should have the command of some Turkish
 “ battalions.

“ I pronounced the formulary word for
 “ word, after the Iman: *Alla illa allah Mo-*
 “ *hammed refoul allah.* They then made me
 “ repeat the prayer, which begins with these
 “ words; *Benamyezdam Bakshaceir dadar,* in
 “ the name of the most merciful God, &c.

“ This ceremony was performed in the
 “ presence of two Musselmen, who went im-
 “ mediately to acquaint the Pacha of Bosnia.
 “ While they were gone on this errand, my
 “ head was shaved, and the Iman covered it
 “ with a Turban, &c.”

We might join some songs of the Count Pa-
 cha to this curious fragment, but, though his
 verses are lively, they are not so interesting as
 his prose.

We have nothing to mention that happened
 in the year 1744, except that our author was
 admitted of almost all the Aadamies in Eu-
 rope, and what is most singular, into that of
La Crusca. He had carefully studied the Ita-
 lian language, as may be seen by an eloquent
 letter of Cardinal Passionei, which begins with
 these words.

“ I have

“ I have read your charming and learned
 “ Italian letter over and over again, and al-
 “ ways with new pleasure. It is difficult to
 “ conceive how a man, who professeth such a
 “ fundamental knowledge of other languages,
 “ could acquire such perfection in this.

“ The remarks which you made in your
 “ letter upon the errors of the greatest men,
 “ comes very apropos ; for the sun has his
 “ spots and eclipses ; they are mentioned in
 “ the most petty almanacks ; and as you very
 “ properly observe, they who censure too se-
 “ verely, have often greater need of our indul-
 “ gence than those whom they reprove. Ho-
 “ mer, Virgil, Tasso, and several others, can
 “ lose but little by some slight faults, covered
 “ with a thousand beauties ; but the Zoiluses
 “ will be ever ridiculous, and incapable of
 “ distinguishing the pearls from Ennius’s dung,
 “ &c.”

Cardinal Passionei wrote, as is evident, al-
 most as well in French as Italian, and thought
 very judiciously. Our Zoiluses did not escape
 him.

About the end of the year 1744, M. de
 Voltaire had a warrant appointing him Histo-
 riographer of France, which he called a pom-
 pous trifle. He was already known by his his-
 tory of Charles XII. which has been so often
 printed. This history was chiefly composed in
 England, when he was in that country with
 Mr. Fabricius, (Chamberlain to George I.
 King of England, and Elector of Hanover,) who

who had lived seven years with Charles XII. after the battle of Pultowa.

Thus was the *Henriade* begun at St. Ange, after his conversation with M. de Caumartin.

That history was much praised for its stile, and as much criticised for the incredibility of its facts: but when King *Stanislaus* sent the following authentic testimony to the author, by the Count de Tressan, his Lieutenant General, the criticisms ceased, and the facts were credited.

“ Mr. de Voltaire has neither forgotten nor
 “ misplaced a single fact or circumstance; all
 “ is truth and properly ranged. He has spo-
 “ ken of Poland and all the events which hap-
 “ pened there, as if he had been an eye wit-
 “ nefs.

“ Given at Comercy, 11th July, 1759.”

Since he had got the title of Historiographer, he was not willing to hold it in vain, lest that should be said of him which was said by one of the Clerks of the Royal Treasury concerning Racine and Boileau, *We have as yet seen nothing of these gentlemen but their subscription.* He wrote his History of the War of 1741, while in its utmost rage, which may be found in his age of Louis XIV. and XV. *

He

* It has been printed separately, and most ridiculously adulterated.

He was then at Etiole, with the charming Madame d'Etiole, afterwards Marchioness of Pompadour. The Court gave orders for some grand festivals in the beginning of the year 1745, when they were about to marry the Dauphin to the Infanta of Spain. They desired to have interludes with singing music, and a kind of comedy, which should connect the songs. It was given in charge to our author, although it was a kind of entertainment for which he had no relish. He chose the story of a Princess of Navarre for his subject. The piece was written superficially. Mr. Popeliniere, one of the Farmers General, but a man of letters, introduced some airs, and the music was composed by the famous Rameau.

Madame d'Etiole at that time obtained the employment of Gentleman in Ordinary of the Chamber, for Mr. de Voltaire. It was a present worth sixty thousand livres, and the more pleasing, that a little after he obtained the singular favour of being permitted to sell this employment, and to preserve the title, privileges, and functions of it.

Few people know the little *impromptu* which he made upon this favour being granted him, without being twice asked.

Mon Henri-quatre et ma Zaire
 Et mon Américaine Alzire
 Ne mon valu jamais un seul regard du Roi
 J'avais mille ennemis avec très peu du gloire ;
 Les honneurs & les biens pleuvent enfin sur moi,
 Pour la Farce de la Foire.

Alzira,

Alzira, Zara, Henry writ in vain,
 Not ev'n a smile could from our Monarch gain ;
 A thousand critics rose to blast my name,
 At last a farce has brought me wealth and fame.

Nevertheless he had a pension of two thousand livres from the King, and one of fifteen hundred from the Queen, a long time before, but he never asked for payment.

History being now a duty, he began his *Age of Louis XIV.* but did not persist in it :—he wrote the Campaign of 1744, and the famous Battle of Fontenoy, entering into the whole detail of that important action. In this poem the number of the killed in each regiment is mentioned. The Count d'Argenson, Secretary of War, had communicated all the Officers letters to him, and the Marechals Noailles and Saxe, gave him their materials.

We believe it will give singular pleasure to those who wish to know men and events, if we transcribe a letter written on the field of battle, to Mr. de Voltaire, by the Marquis d'Argenson, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and eldest brother of the Secretary at War.

He addresses him, Monsieur, the Historian, and says, “ You must have been informed of
 “ the news on which you so heartily congratulate us on Wednesday evening. A Page
 “ set out from the field of battle, to carry the
 “ dispatches, at half past two o'clock on Tuesday,
 “ day, and I am told that he arrived at five
 “ o'clock on Wednesday evening at Versailles. It
 “ was

“ was a glorious spectacle to see the King and
“ the Dauphin writing upon drums, surrounded
“ by the conquerors and conquered, the
“ dead, dying, and prisoners. I made the following remarks.

“ I had the honour of meeting the King
“ near the field of battle, having arrived from
“ Paris on Sunday. I was informed that the
“ King was gone to take an airing, and having
“ got a horse I joined his Majesty near a place
“ which was in view of the enemy’s camp. I
“ then learnt for the first time, what his Majesty’s intentions were, and I never saw a man
“ so cheerful as he was upon the occasion. We
“ discussed that point of history that you have
“ handled in a few lines; which of our Kings
“ gained the last royal battle; and I assure you
“ that his courage did not wrong his judgment,
“ nor his judgment wrong his memory. He
“ then went and lay upon straw;—never was
“ there a ball-night more gay, nor so many
“ *bon-mots* uttered. The King sung a droll
“ song of several verses. They slept all the
“ time, which was not interrupted by Couriers and Aids-de-camp. As to the Dauphin, he went to the battle, as to a hare
“ hunting, and almost said, what! is this all?
“ A cannon-ball struck in the clay, and bespattered a man near the King.—Our masters
“ laughed very heartily at the person that was
“ spattered. One of my brothers grooms, who
“ was behind the company, was wounded in
“ the head with a musket ball.

“ What is true and certain, and without
“ flattery, is, that the King gained the battle
“ by

“ by his own courage and abilities. You will
 “ see different accounts and details, and you
 “ will be informed of our seeing a second edi-
 “ tion of Dettingen, where the French were
 “ prostrated before the English steadiness, whose
 “ rolling fire resembled the flames of hell,
 “ which I own stupified the most unconcerned
 “ spectators, and we began to be in despair
 “ about the state.

“ Some of our generals, who have more
 “ heart and courage than abilities, gave most
 “ excellent advice. They dispatched orders all
 “ the way to Lisle;—they doubled the King’s
 “ guard;—they had every thing packed up,
 “ &c. The King laughed at all this, and go-
 “ ing from the left to the center, he asked for
 “ the corps-de-reserve, and the brave Low-
 “ endahl; but there was no occasion. A charge
 “ was made by the corps-de-reserve, consisting
 “ of the same cavalry which had already made
 “ an unsuccessful attack, the King’s household,
 “ the Carabineers, those of the French guards
 “ who had not moved, and the Irish brigade,
 “ who always distinguish themselves when they
 “ march against the English and Hanoverians.
 “ Your friend, Richelieu, is another Bayard;
 “ it was he who gave the advice to attack the
 “ infantry like hunters or foragers, pell-mell,
 “ the hand lowered, the arm shortened, mas-
 “ ters, servants, officers, cavalry, infantry alto-
 “ gether, and he executed it. Nothing can
 “ withstand this French vivacity which is so
 “ much spoken of, and in ten minutes the bat-
 “ tle was gained by this unforeseen stroke. The
 “ heavy English battalions retired; and, in
 “ short,

“ short, there were fourteen thousand of them
 “ kill’d.*

“ Certainly the artillery had the honour of
 “ this terrible slaughter;—there never were so
 “ many or such large cannon fired at one bat-
 “ tle, as at the battle of Fontenay. There
 “ were no less than a hundred. It would seem
 “ as if the poor enemy were willing to let eve-
 “ ry thing arrive at the army, which could be
 “ unfavourable for them; the cannon from
 “ Douay; the Gensdarmes, and the Muske-
 “ teers.

“ Do not forget one anecdote which happen-
 “ ed at the last attack which I spoke of. The
 “ Dauphin, from a natural impulse, drew his
 “ sword in the most graceful manner, and in-
 “ sisted upon charging, but he was begged to
 “ desist. After all, to mention the bad with
 “ the good, I observed a habit too easily ac-
 “ quired, of looking in tranquillity upon the
 “ stripped dead, the dying, and the reeking
 “ wounds upon the field of battle. For my
 “ part, I own that my heart failed, and that I
 “ wanted a restorative. I attentively remarked
 “ our young heroes, who seemed too in-
 “ different upon this head.—I am afraid for
 “ them, that this inhuman carnage may en-
 “ crease that turn of mind in the course of a
 “ long life.

“ The

* In fact, there were fourteen thousand men mis-
 sing at the muster, but about six thousand returned
 that day.

“ The triumph is the finest thing in the
 “ world.—God save the King; hats in the air
 “ and upon bayonets; the compliments of the
 “ Sovereign to his troops; visiting the en-
 “ trenchments; villages; and redoubts; joy,
 “ glory, and tenderness; but the ground of
 “ the picture is human blood, and fragments
 “ of human flesh.

“ At the end of the triumph, the King ho-
 “ noured me with a conversation on the subject
 “ of peace, and I have dispatched some couri-
 “ ers.

“ The King was much entertained yesterday
 “ in the trenches;—they fired a good deal at
 “ him, but he remained there three hours. I
 “ was employed in my closet, which is my
 “ trench, and I own I have been much retard-
 “ ed in business by all these dissipations. I
 “ trembled at every shot I heard fired. I went
 “ the day before yesterday to see the trenches,
 “ but I cannot say there is any thing entertain-
 “ ing to the eyes. We shall have *Te Deum*
 “ sung to-day under a tent, and there will be
 “ a general *feu de joie* of the whole army,
 “ which the King will go to see from Mount
 “ Trinity;—it will be very fine.

“ Adieu, present my humble respects to Ma-
 “ dame Chatellet.”

It was this same Marquis d'Argenson, whom
 some trifling courtiers used to call the blockhead
 d'Argenson. This letter shews that he was of
 an agreeable turn of mind, and had a very ten-
 der

der heart. They who were acquainted with him, saw more of the philosopher than the politician in him, but chiefly valued him for his being an excellent citizen. He may be judged of by his book, entitled *Considerations upon Government*, printed in 1764, by Marc Michael Rey. Attend chiefly to the chapter *on the sale of offices*. We cannot resist the pleasure of reciting some passages.

“ It is astonishing that a book, which is
 “ called The Political Testament of Cardinal
 “ Richelieu, has met with such general appro-
 “ bation, the work of some church pedant, and
 “ unworthy of the great genius to whom it has
 “ been ascribed, if it was not for the chapter
 “ where the sale of offices is anathematized. A
 “ wretched invention, which has been produc-
 “ tive of so many mischiefs, the remedies for
 “ which, though most indispensably necessary,
 “ is almost become impracticable ; for it would
 “ require the whole revenues of the state only
 “ to re-imburse the principal Officers, who do
 “ the greatest harm,”

This important passage seems to have fore-
 told, at a distance, the abolition * of this shame-
 ful venality, which was accomplished in 1771,
 to the astonishment of all France, where such
 a reformation was thought impracticable. In
 the above passage we discover the same opinions
 entertained by Mr. de Voltaire, who has shewn
 the absurd errors with which that libel swarms,
 that

* This abolition in 1771, was only transitory.

that has been so ridiculously ascribed to Cardinal Richelieu, and who has wiped away from the memory of that able and respectable Minister, the stain with which his name was covered, by ascribing such an impertinent work to him.

Let us likewise transcribe a part of the picture which the Marquis d'Argenson has drawn of the wretchedness of the peasants.

“ To begin with the King ; the higher the rank at Court, it is the more difficult to persuade one’s self of the wretchedness of the country. The nobility who have great possessions in the country, sometimes hear a good deal said upon the subject, but their hard hearts feel nothing in these miseries, but the dimunition of their revenues. Those who come from the country, and were affected with what they saw, very soon forget it, by being immersed in the delights of the capital. *We must have steady souls and tender hearts to be able to preserve compassion for objects at a distance.*”

That truly patriotic Minister had always a tender friendship for Mr. de Voltaire, from his infancy. We have seen a great deal of their correspondence ; and the consequence was, that the Secretary of State employed the man of genius in several important affairs during the years 1745, 1746, and 1747, which is probably the reason of our not having any theatrical pieces from our author during that period.

We

We observe by his papers, that the secret of the proposed descent upon England, which was undertaken in the year 1746, was trusted to him. The Duke of Richelieu was to have commanded the army. The Pretender had gained two battles, and a revolution was expected. Mr. de Voltaire was employed to write the following Manifesto, which we have copied from his own hand.

M A N I F E S T O

Of the King of France in favour of Prince Charles Edward.

“ The most serene Prince Charles Edward
 “ having disembarked in Great Britain, with-
 “ out any assistance but his own personal cou-
 “ rage, and his actions having procured him
 “ the admiration of Europe, and the hearts of
 “ every true Englishman, the King of France
 “ joins in the same sentiments. He esteems it
 “ his duty, at the same time, to assist a Prince
 “ who is worthy of inheriting the Throne of
 “ his ancestors, and a generous people, of whom
 “ the worthiest part have joined in recalling
 “ Prince Charles Stuart to his country. He
 “ sends the Duke of Richelieu at the head of
 “ his army, because the English, of the purest
 “ intentions, have solicited this assistance; and
 “ he sends only the precise number of troops
 “ which have been demanded, because he will
 “ be ready to withdraw them as soon as the
 “ English nation shall require it. His Majes-
 “ ty, in affording this just assistance to his re-
 “ lation,

“ lation, the descendant of so many Kings,
 “ and a Prince so worthy of a Throne, takes
 “ this step jointly with the people of Eng-
 “ land, only with the design, to restore
 “ peace to them and all Europe, and from a
 “ persuasion, that it will have the desired ef-
 “ fect; being perfectly convinced, that the
 “ most Serene Prince Edward depends upon
 “ the good will of the people, and looks upon
 “ the support of their liberties, laws, and hap-
 “ piness, as the great purpose of all his under-
 “ takings; and, lastly, because the greatest
 “ Kings of England have been those, who,
 “ like him, being bred in adversity, have de-
 “ served the love and esteem of the nation.

“ It is in these sentiments that the King as-
 “ sists their Prince, the son of him who was
 “ born the lawful heir of three kingdoms, a
 “ warrior, who comes to throw himself into
 “ their arms, and notwithstanding his valour,
 “ expects nothing from them and their laws,
 “ but a confirmation of his most sacred rights:
 “ who never can have a separate interest from
 “ theirs, and whose virtues have at length soft-
 “ ened the hearts that were the most prejudic-
 “ ed against his cause.

“ He hopes that such an opportunity will
 “ reunite two nations that ought mutually to
 “ esteem one another;—who are naturally
 “ connected by their commercial wants, and
 “ ought to be so upon this occasion, by the
 “ interests of a Prince who deserves the good-
 “ will of all mankind.

“ The Duke of Richelieu commanding the
 “ army of his Majesty the King of France,
 “ addresses

“ addresses this declaration to the faithful people of the three kingdoms of Great Britain, and assures them of the constant protection of the King his master. He comes to join the heir of their ancient Kings, and like him to shed his blood for their service.”

It is evident by the expressions in this piece, what were the sentiments of esteem and inclination, which the author had at all times entertained for the English nation, and in which he has always persisted. *

It was the unfortunate Count Lally who projected the scheme of this descent, which was afterwards laid aside. He was born in Ireland, and detested the English as much as our author loved and esteemed them. We have so often heard Mr. de Voltaire say, that this hatred was a violent passion in Lally, that we cannot help testifying our astonishment at that General having been accused, since that time, of betraying Pondicherry to the English. The decree which condemned Monsieur Lally to be put to death, is one of the most extraordinary sentences which has been given in our days, and was a consequence of the misfortunes of France. This instance, and that of the Marechal de Marillac, plainly shew that whoever is at the head of armies or affairs of state, is seldom sure of dying in his own bed, or in the bed of honour.

It

* *By the composition of this manifesto, we may see Mr. Voltaire's affection for the English nation, and his gratitude to the family of Hanover, to whom he owed the foundation of his fortune.*

It was in the year 1746 that Mr. de Voltaire was admitted into the French Academy. He was the first who deviated from the insipid custom of filling their introductory discourses with nothing but the praises of Cardinal Richelieu, which had been often repeated on former admissions. He embellished his discourse with new remarks upon taste, and upon the French language. They who have been admitted since his time, have generally followed and perfected this useful practice.

He accompanied Madame du Chatellet to the Court of King Stanislaus at Luneville, in 1748, when he gave the Comedy of *Nanine*, which was played on the 17th of July in that year. It did not succeed at first, but some time after, it had a very considerable and continued run. This whimsicalness of the public can be ascribed only to the secret desire of humbling a man who is too much favoured: but after a time pleasure restores them to the proper channel.

The same thing happened at the first representation of *Semiramis* on the 29th of August of the same year, 1748, but at last it had greater success upon the stage than either *Me- rope* or *Mahomet*.

It was a very extraordinary thing in our opinion that he did not declare himself to be the author of the panegyric upon Louis XV. which was printed in the year 1749, and was translated into Latin, Italian, Spanish, and English.

The disorder which alarmed the public so much for the life of Louis XV. and the battle of Fontenoy, which occasioned still greater fears for the King and the nation, rendered the work very interesting. The praise which the author bestowed was supported by facts, and there was that philosophic turn in it, which evidently characterises whatever has come from his hands. This work was as much the panegyric of the Officers as of the King, yet he did not present it to any one, not even to his Majesty. He knew very well that he did not live in the age of Pelisson. He wrote to his friend Mr. Fourmont :

Cet éloge a très-peu d'effet
 Nul mortel ne m'en remercie
 Celui qui le moins s'en soucie.
 Est celui pour qui je l'ai fait.

My panegyric meets neglect,
 None shews it ev'n the least respect;
 No, not the object of my praise,
 Regards the Author or his lays.

He was at the court of Stainislaus, in the palace of Lunéville, in that same year 1749, with the Marchioness of Chatellet, when that illustrious Lady died there. The King of Prussia at that time gave Mr. de Voltaire an invitation to come and live with him. It was not till towards the end of the month of August, 1750, after having for six months combated the opinions of all his friends, who strongly dissuaded him from going, that we find him resolved to quit France, and attach himself to his Prussian Majesty for the rest of his life. He could not
 withstand

withstand the letter which the King of Prussia wrote to him the 23d of August from the apartments destined for his future guest in the palace of Berlin: a letter which has been often printed and is universally known.

“ I have seen the letter which your niece wrote to you from Paris. The friendship which she expresses for you, commands my esteem. I should think as she does if I were Madame Denis; but being what I am, I think otherways. I should be distracted if I thought myself the cause of making my enemy wretched; how then could I desire the unhappiness of the man whom I love and esteem, and who, for my sake has given up his country, and whatever has been thought dear among men? No, my dear Voltaire, I should be the first to dissuade you from it, if I could foresee that your coming to live in this country could in the smallest degree prove a disadvantage to you. Yes, I should prefer your happiness to the excessive pleasure I have in your company. But you are a Philosopher, and so am I; what can be more natural, more simple or reasonable, than that those Philosophers who were formed to live together, who are united by the same studies, who have the same taste, and the same manner of thinking, should enjoy that satisfaction?

“ I respect you as my master in learning and eloquence, and I love you as a virtuous friend. What slavery, what unhappiness, what change, what inconstancy of fortune,

“ is to be dreaded in a country where you are
 “ as highly valued as in your own, and with a
 “ friend who has a grateful heart? I have not
 “ the foolish presumption to think Berlin equal
 “ to Paris. If riches, grandeur, and magnifi-
 “ cence, make a city agreeable, Berlin must
 “ yield to Paris. If there is a particular place
 “ to be found in the world, where fine taste
 “ more generally prevails, I know, and allow
 “ it is Paris: but do not you carry that taste
 “ with you wherever you go? We have pow-
 “ ers sufficient to praise your merits, and as
 “ to sentiment, we will not yield to any coun-
 “ try upon earth. I respected the friendship
 “ which attached you to Madame du Chatellet,
 “ but after her, I am one of your oldest friends.
 “ What! because you consent to retire to my
 “ house, shall it be said that that house be-
 “ comes your prison? shall I become your ty-
 “ rant because I am your friend? I confess to
 “ you I do not understand that logic, and I am
 “ firmly persuaded that you will be very happy
 “ here, as long as I shall live: you will be
 “ looked upon as the father of letters, and of
 “ men of taste; and you will find every com-
 “ fort in me, which a man of your merit can
 “ expect from one who values him. Good-
 “ night.”

FREDERIC.

After this letter, the King of Prussia asked
 the consent of the King of France, by his Mi-
 nister at that Court, which was readily grant-
 ed. Our author was presented at Berlin with
 the order of merit, the key of Chamberlain,
 and

and a pension of twenty thousand livres. However he did not give up his house at Paris, and by the accounts of Mr. Delaleu, the Notary, we find that Mr. de Voltaire was at an expence of thirty thousand livres a year there. He was attached to the King of Prussia by the most respectful regard, as well as by their conformity of taste. He has a hundred times said, that that Monarch was as agreeable in company, as he was formidable at the head of an army: and that he had never more pleasing evening parties at Paris, than those to which that Prince would have constantly admitted him. His regard for the King of Prussia rose to a degree of enthusiasm. His apartments were under the King's, and he never quitted them but to go to supper. The King composed his works in philosophy, history, and poetry, in the upper apartments, while his favourite cultivated the same arts and the same talents in the lower. They communicated their works to one another. The Prussian Monarch wrote his memoirs of the House of Brandenburg at Potzdam; and the French author having carried his materials with him, wrote his age of Louis XIV. at the same place. Thus did his days glide along in tranquillity enlivened by such agreeable employments.

His *Orestes*, and *Rome Preserved*, were performed at Paris. *Orestes* was played about the end of the year 1759, and *Rome Preserved* in 1760. These two pieces, like his *Merope* and *The Death of Cæsar*, are entirely free from any love affair. He wished to purge the stage of every thing which was not capable of producing

ing the emotions proper to Tragedy. He looked upon *Electra* in love as a monster dressed in dirty ribbons; and in different works he has shewn that these were his sentiments.

We have recovered a letter of his in verse, which he sent to the king of Prussia with his manuscript of *Orestes*.

Grand juge, & grand feseur de vers,
Lisez cette œuvre dramatique,
Ce croquis de la scène antique
Que des grecs le pinceau tragique
Fit admirer à l'univers;
Jugez si l'ardeur amoureuse
D'une Electre de quarante ans.
Doit dans de tels événements
Etaler les beaux sentiments
D'une heroine douceuse
En massacrant ses chers parents
D'une main peu respectueuse.

Une princesse en son printems,
Qui surtout n'auroient rien à faire,
Pourrait avoir par passe tems
A ses pieds un ou deux amans
Et les tromper avec mistere.
Mais la fille d'Agamemnon
N'eut dans la tête d'autre affaire
Que d'être digne de son nom,
Et de vanger le roi son père.
Et j'estime encore que son frère
Ne doit point être un Céladon.
Ce héros fort atrabilaire
N'était point né sur le Lignon:
Apprenez moi mon Apollon
Si j'ai tort d'être si sévère,
Et lequel des deux doit vous plaire
De Sophocle ou de Crebillon.
Sophocle peut avoir raison,
Et laisser des torts à Voltaire;

O thou

O thou in whose capacious mind
 The Poet with the Critic join'd,
 Unite their mingled fires,
 These homely lines deign to peruse,
 Faint transcript of a Grecian muse,
 Whose strains the world admires.

Say if it would the scene improve,
 Should old Electra talk of love,
 And languishing complain,
 Or frantic for her slaughter'd Sire,
 With fell revenge her bosom fire,
 Till blood efface the stain?

'Tis granted that at warm fifteen,
 A sighing Princess might be seen,
 To burn in am'rous flame;
 But past the heyday of the blood,
 Now cool'd the lusty youthful flood,
 At forty—is't the same?

Nor should Orestes sigh and whine,
 And for a mistress idly pine,
 Or weep because he's scorn'd;
 By fury stung he madly drew
 His falchion, and his mother slew;
 With other flames he burn'd.

Now, my Apollo, deign to tell,
 If I have reason'd ill or well,
 And which will stand the test?
 Crebillon and the Grecian bard
 Humbly solicit your award,
 Say, which will please you best?

It must be owned, that nothing could be more agreeable than this kind of life, or any thing do more honour to philosophy and the Belles-lettres. This happiness would have been more lasting,
 and

and would not have given place to a still greater happiness, if it had not been for a dispute on a subject in mixed Mathematics, which arose between Maupertuis, who likewise lived at that time with the King of Prussia, and Kœnig, librarian to the Princess of Orange, at the Hague. This dispute was a continuation of that which for a long time had divided the Mathematicians about the living and dead forces. It cannot be denied but that a little quackery gets into this subject, as well as into theology and medicine. It was a most trifling question at best, for let them entangle it as much as they will, they must always return to the plain laws of motion. The tempers of the disputants were sowered, and Maupertuis, who ruled the Academy at Berlin, procured a condemnation of Kœnig's opinion in the Year 1752, on the authority of a letter of the late Leibnitz, without being able to produce the original of that letter, which however had been seen by Mr. Wolf. He went still farther,—he wrote to the Princess of Orange, to beg her to dismiss Kœnig from his employment of Librarian; and represented him to the King of Prussia, as a man who had been wanting in the respect due to his Majesty. Voltaire, who had passed the two whole years at Cirey with Kœnig, during which he had contracted an intimacy, thought it was his duty openly to espouse the cause of his friend.

The quarrel became violent, and the study of Philosophy degenerated into faction and cabal. Maupertuis was at some pains to have it reported at Court, that one day while General Manstein happened to be in the apartments of Mr. de Voltaire, who was then translating into French,

The

The Memoirs of Russia, composed by that Officer, the King, in his usual manner, sent a copy of verses to be examined, when Voltaire said to Manstein, *Let us leave off for the present, my friend, you see the King has sent me his dirty linen to wash, I will wash your's another time.* A single word is sometimes sufficient to ruin a man at Court; Maupertuis imputed such a word to Voltaire, and succeeded.

It was about this very time that Maupertuis published his very strange and Philosophical Letters, in which he proposed to build a Latin city; to sail in quest of discoveries directly under the Pole; to perforate the earth to the center;—to go to the Streights of Magellan, and dissect the brains of a Patagonian, in order to investigate the nature of the soul;—to cover the bodies of the sick with pitch, to prevent the danger of perspiration; and above all, not to pay the Physician.

Mr. de Voltaire heightened these Philosophic ideas with all the railery which so fine an opportunity presented, and unfortunately the learned all over Europe were amused with the ridicule. Maupertuis was careful to join his own cause to the cause of the King; and this piece of ridicule was looked upon as a failure in respect to his Majesty. Our Author in the most respectful manner returned the key of Chamberlain, and the cross of his order to the King, with the following verses.

“ Je les recus avec tendresse ;
 “ Je vous les rend avec douleur,
 “ Comme un amant jaloux, dans sa mauvaise humeur,
 “ Rend le portrait de sa Maitresse.

With

With rapture I those gifts receiv'd,
 Now to return them much I'm griev'd ;
 Such pangs the jealous swain attack,
 Who sends his mistress' picture back.

The King sent back the key and ribbon. Our author then set out to pay a visit to her Highness the Dutchess of Gotha, who continued to honour him with her friendship while she lived. It was for her that he wrote *The Annals of the Empire*, about a year after ; a work which was entirely new modelled in his *Essay upon the History of the Genius and Manners of Nations*.

While he remained at Gotha, Maupertuis employed all his batteries against our traveller, which he was made sensible of when he came to meet his niece, Madam Denis, at Francfort on the Mayne.

On the first of June, an honest German, who neither loved the French nor their verses, came, and in bad French demanded the works in *poesby* of the King his master. Our traveller replied, that the works in *poesby* were with the rest of his property at Leipfic. The German informed him, that he was ordered to Francfort, and must not depart till these works arrived. Mr. de Voltaire gave him the key of Chamberlain, and the cross of the order, and promised to restore what he had demanded ; upon which the messenger wrote the following billet*.

S I R,

“ So soon the large package from Leipfic shall
 “ be here, where is the work of poesby of the
 “ King, my master, you may depart wherever
 “ you think proper.

“ Francfort, 1st June, 1753.

The

* The Translator, that the spirit of the original might not evaporate, has rendered it word for word.

The prisoner wrote at the bottom of the note,
*Good for the work of poesby of the King, your mas-
 ter.*

But when the verses arrived, it was pretended there were some Bills of Exchange expected, which did not arrive.—The travellers were detained fifteen days at the sign of the Goat, on account of these pretended Bills; and at last were not permitted to depart without paying a considerable ransom. These are details which never come to the ears of Kings.

This adventure was very soon forgotten by both parties, and with great propriety. The King sent back his verses to his old admirer, and soon after a considerable number of new ones. It was a love quarrel;—the bickerings of a Court soon die away; but a laudable ruling passion will long continue. Our French traveller, on reading over again that eloquent and affecting letter of the King's, which we have transcribed, felt his former tenderness return, and cried, *After such a letter I must certainly have been greatly in the wrong.*

After his escape from Berlin, he went and amused himself at a little estate he had in Alsace, in the territories of the Duke of Wirtemberg, where he published the *Annals of the Empire*, which he made a present of to John Frederic Shoeflen, bookseller at Colmar, and brother to the celebrated Shoeflen, Professor of History at Strasbourg. This bookseller's affairs were much out of order, and Mr. de Voltaire lent him ten thousand livres. Upon this occasion we cannot help expressing our astonishment at the meanness of those scribblers, who gave it out, that he had made an immense fortune by the constant sale of his works.

Mr.

Mr. Vernet, a French refugee, and minister of the gospel at Geneva, and Messrs. Cramer, old freemen of that famous city, wrote to him while at Colmar, requiring him to come and print his works there. The two brothers, who were at the head of a society of booksellers, were preferred, and he gave them to these gentlemen on the same terms he had done to Mr. Shoeffen, that is to say, in a present. He then went to Geneva with his niece, and his friend Mr. Coligny, who had acted as his secretary, and who has since been secretary and librarian to the Elector Palatine.

He purchased a lease for life of a country-house near that town, where the neighbourhood is extremely agreeable, and there is the finest view in Europe. He bought another at Lau-sanne, and both of them upon condition that a certain sum should be returned him when he quitted them. It was the first instance of a Roman Catholic getting an establishment in these Cantons, since the time of Zuinglius and Calvin.

He likewise purchased two estates in the *Pays de Gex*, about a league from Geneva. His principal residence was at Ferney, of which he made a present to Madame Denis: it was a Seignory, which had been absolutely free from all royal duties and imposts from the time of Henry IV. In all the other provinces of the kingdom, there are not two which have the same privileges; the King confirmed these privileges to him by a warrant, which was an obligation conferred upon him by the interest of the most generous and worthiest of men, the Duke de Choiseul, to whom he had not even the honour of being personally known.

The

The little *Pays de Gex* was at this time almost a savage desert. Four-score ploughs had been laid aside ever since the revocation of the edict of Nants; half the country was a continued morass, which produced diseases and infection. Our author's ambition was to settle in some forsaken Canton, and to restore it to its former flourishing condition. As we advance nothing without authentic proofs, we shall transcribe only one of his letters to the Bishop of Annecy, in whose diocese Ferney is situated. We cannot recover the date of the letter, but it was written in the year 1759.

“ S I R,

“ The Parson of the little village of N . . . ,
 “ in the neighbourhood of my estate, has
 “ commenced a process against my vassals of
 “ Ferney, and having frequently left his Cure
 “ to carry it on at Dijon, he easily overpowers
 “ the farmers who are kept at home in order to
 “ labour for their daily support. He charges
 “ them fifteen hundred livres costs of suit, and
 “ has the cruelty to include in those costs the
 “ expence of the journeys he took on purpose
 “ to ruin them. You, Sir, know better than
 “ I, how the Popes in the early ages of the
 “ church were incensed against the Clergy who
 “ sacrificed to temporal affairs that time which
 “ should have been dedicated to the service of
 “ the altar. But if they had been told that a
 “ Priest came with officers of justice to extort
 “ money from families, to oblige them to part
 “ with the only meadow which they had to
 “ feed their cattle, and to take the milk from
 “ their children, what would the Ireneuses,
 “ the

“ the Jeroms, and Augustins, have said? This
“ is what a Parson has done at the gate of my
“ castle. I sent to let him know that I would
“ pay the greatest part of what he exacted from
“ my tenants, but he answered that that would
“ not satisfy him.

“ You, no doubt, sigh at the thoughts of
“ any Pastors of the true church setting such
“ horrid examples, while there is not a single
“ instance of a Protestant Clergyman having
“ entered into a law suit with his * parishioners
“ about money matters, &c.

This letter, and the issue of that affair, may suggest some very important reflections. Mr. de Voltaire put an end to the process, and the whole affair, by paying the claims which oppressed his poor tenants out of his own pocket; and this wretched district very soon changed its appearance.

He extricated himself more agreeably out of a dispute in the protestant country, where he had two very agreeable possessions, the one at Geneva, which is still called the House of Delights, and the other at Lausanne.

It is sufficiently known how dearly he loved liberty; to what degree he hated persecution, and with what horror he at all times looked upon those wicked hypocrites who, in the name of God, dared to destroy, by the most dreadful punishments,

* What occasions the Protestant Clergy having no suits with their flocks, is their being paid their salaries by the States. They have no dispute with miserable wretches about their eighth or tenth sheaf. The Empress Catharine has taken the same method in her immense dominions, where the plague of tythes is unknown.

punishments, those people whom they accused of differing from them in sentiment. It was upon such occasions that he sometimes repeated,

*Je ne decide entre Genève et Rome.
I pretend not to decide between Rome and Geneva.*

One of these letters happened to be made public by a very common indiscretion, in which he said that that Picard, John Chauvin, (called Calvin) the assassinator of Servetus, *had a diabolical heart*, and some bigots were offended, or pretended to be offended, at the expression. A gentleman of Geneva of the name of Rival, who was a man of genius, addressed the following lines to him upon that occasion.

Servet eut tort, & fut un sot
D'oser dans un siècle folot
S'avouer antitrinitaire.*
Et nôtre illustre atrabilaire
Eût tort d'employer le fagot
Pour réfuter son adversaire.
Et tort nôtre antique sênat
D'avoir prêté son ministère
A ce dangereux coup d'état.
Quelle barbare inconséquence!
O malheureux siècle ignorant!
Nous osions abhorer en France
Les horreurs de l'intolérance
Tandis qu'un zèle intolérant
Nous faisait bruler un errant!
Pour nôtre prêtre épistolaire
Qui de son petulant effort

Pour

* Servetus might rest on Calvin's own words, who says in one of his works, *in case that any one is heterodox, and scruples at the words trinity and person, we do not believe there is sufficient reason for rejecting that man, &c.*

Pour exhalér sa bile amère
 Vient réveiller le chat qui dort,
 Et dont l'inepte commentaire
 Met au jour ce qu'il eût du taire
 Je laisse à juger s'il a tort.

Quant à vous célèbre Voltaire
 Vous eûtes tort, c'est mon avis.
 Vous vous plaisez dans ce pais
 Fêtez le saint qu'on y révere.
 Vous avez à satiété
 Les biens où la raison aspire ;
 L'opulence, la liberté,
 La paix, (qu'en cent lieux on désire)
 Des droits à l'immortalité,
 Cent fois plus qu'on ne saurait dire,
 On a du goût, on vous admire,
 Tronchin veille à votre santé.
 Cela vaut bien en vérité
 Qu'on immole à sa sûreté.
 Le plaisir de pincer sans rire.

Servetus in a bigot age,
 'Gainst orthodoxy turn'd his rage,
 He was not over wise ;
 Calvin with equal madness led,
 Devotes to flames the guilty head,
 And poor Servetus dies.
 Our antient senate aids the cause,
 Abets those sanguinary laws,
 And lights th' inhuman fires ;
 Our antient senate sure was wrong,
 To join a blinded frantic throng,
 Whom barbarous rage inspires.
 We mourn'd the Frenchmen's savage zeal,
 Destructive of the public weal,
 By which their victims bled :
 And yet at home, we did the same,
 And madly to the raging flame
 A hapless wanderer led.

The

The meddling priest to purge his bile,
 Who kindles fresh th' extinguish'd pile,
 And bright religion stains,
 By commentaries, which reveal
 What he for ever should conceal,
 Shews too his heated brains,
 E'en thou Voltaire, so justly priz'd,
 If thou by me might be advis'd,
 Forbid thy pen to stray ;
 Nor honours to our saint refuse,
 With us, since your abode you choose,
 'Tis sure the prudent way.
 Nature and fortune both combine,
 In you their choicest gifts to join,
 With wealth, with genius blest ;
 Nor want we sense your works to prize,
 If they have merit, we have eyes,
 By all their worth's confest.
 Here peace and freedom crown your age,
 Here Tronchin too a friendly sage,
 Your health incessant guards ;
 Then while such blessings you enjoy,
 Would you your happiness destroy,
 For Satire's lean rewards ?

Our author replied to these Verses by the following :

Non, je n'ai point tort d'oser dire.
 Ce que pensent les gens de bien.
 Et le sage qui ne craint rien
 A le beau droit de tout écrire.

J'ai quarante ans bravé l'empire
 Des lâches tirans des esprits.
 Et dans votre petit pais
 J'aurais grand tort de me dedire.

Je fais que souvent le malin
 A caché sa queue & sa griffe
 Sous la tiare d'un Pontife
 Et sous le manteau de Calvin.

Je

66 HISTORICAL MEMOIRS

Je n'ai point tort quand je deteste
Ces assassins religieux
Employant le fer and le feu
Pour servir le Père céleste.

Oui, jusqu'au dernier de mes jours
Mon ame sera fière & tendre,
J'oserais gemir sur la cendre
Et des *Servets* & des *Dubourgs**.

De cette horrible frénésie
A la fin le tems est passé ;
Le fanatisme est terrassé,
Mais il reste l'hipocrisie.

Farceurs à manteaux étriqués,
Mauvaise musique d'Eglise,
Mauvais vers et sermons croqués,
Ai 'je tort si je vous meprise ?

No sure, I can't be in the wrong,
Loud to proclaim with daring tongue
The thoughts of every sage ;
The man whose heart for virtue glows,
Nor dastard fears, nor danger knows,
But stems fanatic rage.

Full forty years I've boldly fought
The wretches that would fetter thought,
And tyrannize the mind :
And surely in this petty state,
Now to recant, the blame were great,
'Twould speak me mean and blind.

Full oft mankind's infiduous foe,
Leaving the dreary realms below,
To Peter's chair has shuffled ;

And

* Dubourg, Counsellor and Clerk of Parliament
was served at Paris, as Servetus was at Geneva.

And oft his claws and tail conceal'd,
 So close they cou'd not be beheld,
 In Calvin's cloak been muffled.

Still keen resentment fires my breast,
 Those holy murd'ers I detest,
 Who sword and fire employ;
 Who in our heavenly father's cause,
 Breaking his fundamental laws,
 His images destroy,

So long as life informs my heart,
 I'll constant act my wonted part,
 Be proud and tender still;
 O'er Dubourg and Servetus pour
 With equal zeal the pious shower,
 Nor dread the threaten'd ill.

But now those horrid scenes are o'er,
 The blazing pile we see no more;
 That frantic zeal is fled;
 Hypocrisy now fills its room,
 Whose train diffusing fullen gloom,
 Their baneful influence shed.

Ye base unsightly crew avaunt,
 Silence your vile unmeaning cant,
 That cheats the gaping throng;
 Your stupid hymns, your sermons vile,
 I do not think them worth the while,
 And, am I in the wrong?

We may see by this answer, that he was neither of Apollos, nor of Cephas, and that he preached toleration to the Protestant churches, as well as to the Romish. He always said, that it was the only way to make life tolerable, and that he would be content to die, if he could establish these maxims in Europe. It may be said that he has not been altogether mistaken in his design, and that he has contributed not a little to render the clergy, from Geneva to Madrid,

drid, more gentle and humane, and especially by opening the eyes of the laity.

Being persuaded that the representations of dramatic works of genius, contributed as much to soften savage manners, as the exhibitions of the Gladiators formerly did to harden them, he built a handsome little theatre at Ferney, and notwithstanding his bad state of health, sometimes played himself; his niece, Madame Denis, who possessed uncommon talents for music and elocution, acted several characters there. Mademoiselle Clairon, and the famous Lekain, performed in some pieces on that stage, and people twenty leagues distant came to hear them. He has oftener than once had suppers of a hundred covers, and balls; but notwithstanding his advanced age, and the appearance of a life of dissipation, he never discontinued his studies. On the 20th of August, 1755, he brought his *Orphan of China* upon the stage at Paris, and *Tancred* on the third of September, 1760. Mademoiselle Clairon, and Mr. Lekain, displayed all their abilities in performing these pieces.

The *Scotchwoman*, a comedy, in prose, was not intended for the stage, but it was played with great success that year. He amused himself in composing this piece to chastise the abusive Freron, whom he mortified, but did not correct. This comedy, translated into English by Mr. Colman*, had as great a run at London as at Paris. These works took no time; the

Scotch-

* Colman's play is entitled *The English Merchant*.

Scotchwoman was written in eight days, and *Tancred* in a month.

While he was in the midst of these employments and amusements, Mr. Titon du Tillet, who had been long master in ordinary of the Queen's household, and eighty-five years of age, recommended to him the grand-daughter of the great Corneille, who being without a fortune, was forsaken by the whole world. It was this same Titon du Tillet, who being a great lover of the fine arts, without cultivating them, caused a figure of Mount Parnassus to be constructed in bronze, at a considerable expence, in which are seen the statues of several French poets and musicians. This monument is in the King of France's library. He bred up Mademoiselle Corneille at his own house, but seeing his fortune spent, he could do no more for her, and imagined that Mr. de Voltaire would take care of a lady of so respectable a name. Mr. du Mallard, a member of several Academies, known by his learned and judicious dissertation upon the ancient and modern tragedies of *Electra*, and Mr. Le Brun, Secretary to the Prince of Conti, wrote a joint letter to Mr. de Voltaire. He thanked them for the honour they had done him in casting their eyes upon him, and observed, *that it was no more than the duty of an old soldier, to serve the grand-daughter of his General.* The young lady came to his country house of *Delices*, near Geneva, in 1760, and from thence to his castle at Ferney. Madame Denis most chearfully undertook to finish her education, and at the end of three years Mr. de Voltaire married her to Mr. Dupuis of the *pays de Gex*, a Captain, and
since

since that time a Field Officer of Dragoons. Beside the portion which he gave them, and the pleasure he had in keeping them to live with him, he proposed to write a commentary on the works of Pierre Corneille, for the benefit of his descendent, and to print them by subscription. The King of France was pleased to subscribe ten thousand livres, and some other Princes followed the example. The Duke de Choiseul, whose generosity is so well known, the Duchess de Gramont, and Madame Pompadour, subscribed considerable sums. Mr. de la Borde, the King's Banker, not only took a number of copies, but occasioned so great a number to be sold, that by his zeal and liberality he was the principal founder of Mademoiselle Corneille's fortune; so that in a little time she had fifty thousand livres for a wedding present.

There happened a very singular occurrence during this rapid subscription. Madame de Geofrin, a lady remarkable for character and genius, had been executrix of the famous Bernard de Fontenelle, the nephew of Pierre Corneille. Mr. Fontenelle unfortunately had forgotten this relation, who not being presented to him till too short a time before his death, was dismissed, along with her father and mother, as unknown pretenders that had assumed the name of Corneille. Some friends, affected with the fate of this unfortunate family, but excessively indiscreet, and very ill-informed, commenced a rash prosecution against Madame Geofrin, and found a Counsellor, who, abusing the privileges of the Bar, published a very scurrilous case against this lady. Madame de Geofrin, who was most
unjustly

unjustly attacked, gained her cause unanimously. Notwithstanding the bad treatment she met with, she had the magnanimity to forget it, and was the first to subscribe a considerable sum.

The Academy as a body, the Duke de Choiseul, the Duchefs de Gramont, Madame Pompadour, and a number of the nobility, gave Mr. de Voltaire a power to sign the contract of marriage for them. This is one of the occurrences which reflects the greatest honour on literature.

While he was making preparations for this marriage, which has proved very happy, he enjoyed another singular satisfaction, by being the means of having a paternal estate restored to six gentlemen, who were almost all minors, which had been purchased by the Jesuits at an under rate. But it is necessary to give the particulars of the affair from the beginning.—It is the more interesting, as it began before the famous bankruptcy of the Jesuit Lavalette and Company, and in a manner was the first signal of the suppression of the Jesuits in France.

There were six brothers of the ancient and noble family of Deprez de Craffi, in the *Pays de Gex*, on the borders of Switzerland, and all in the King's service. One of them, who was a Captain in the regiment of Deux-Ponts, in conversation with his neighbour, Mr. de Voltaire, gave him an account of the sad condition of the family estate; told him it was of considerable value, and might prove a resource to them, but had been a long time mortgaged to some people in Geneva.

The

The Jesuits had purchased some lands adjoining to this estate, in a place called Ornex, worth about two thousand crowns a year. They wanted to have the estate of the Messrs. de Crassi, joined to their domain. The superior of the Jesuits, whose real name was *Fesse*, which he changed to *Fessi*, settled matters with the Genevan creditors, so as to purchase the lands. He procured leave of the Council, and was upon the point of getting it confirmed at Dijon. He was told that there were minors, who, notwithstanding the leave of the Council, might recover their rights; but he answered that the Jesuits run no risk, for the Messrs. de Crassi never could be able to pay the money which was requisite for them to get possession of the paternal estate.

Mr. de Voltaire was scarcely informed of the extraordinary method that Father Fesse was taking to serve the company of Jesuits, when he instantly went to the Clerk of the Precinct of Gex, and deposited a sufficient sum in his hands, to answer the claims of the original creditors, so that the family of de Crassi might recover their right. The Jesuits were obliged to desist;—the family were put in possession of the estate by a decree of the Parliament of Dijon, and enjoy it at present.

The best of the whole affair is, that in a little time after, when France was delivered from the Reverend Jesuits, these very gentlemen, whose property the good Fathers were desirous of seizing, purchased the lands of the Jesuits, which were contiguous to them. Mr. de Voltaire, who
had

had always combated the Jesuits and Atheists, wrote upon the occasion that we must acknowledge a Providence.

Certainly it was neither hatred against Father Fesse, nor a desire of mortifying the Jesuits that engaged him in this affair, for since the suppression of that society, he has taken a Jesuit into his house, and numbers have written to him to beg he would likewise receive them. But some tempers have been found among the Ex-Jesuits, of a more unjust and uncomplying cast. Two of them, *Patouillet* and *Nonnote*, have made money by writing libels against him, and according to custom have not failed to call the Catholic religion to their assistance. One *Nonnote* particularly signalized himself by writing half a dozen volumes, in which he has lavished more zeal than knowledge, and more abuse than zeal. Mr. *Damillaville*, one of the best assistants in the *Encyclopedie*, has condescended to confute him, as *Pasquier* formerly stooped to check the absurd insolence of the Jesuit *Garrasse*.

But here follows the most singular and fatal adventure that has happened for a long time, and at the same time the most honourable for the King, his Council, and the Gentlemen of the Court of Requests. Who would have suspected that the first step towards clearing up the innocence of the celebrated family of *Calas*, should have originated in the ice of *Mont-Jura*, and the borders of *Switzerland*? *Donat Calas*, a boy of fifteen years of age, and the youngest son of the unfortunate *Calas*, was apprentice to a merchant at *Nismes*, when he heard of the dreadful punishment by which seven, unfortu-

E nately

nately prejudiced Judges of Toulouse, had put his worthy father to death.

The popular outcry against this family was so violent in Languedoc, that every body expected to see the children of Calas broke upon the wheel, and the mother burnt alive. Even the Attorney General expected it. So weak, it is said, had been the defence made by this innocent family, oppressed by misfortunes, and terrified at the sight of lighted piles, wheels, and racks.

Young Donat Calas was made to dread sharing the fate of the rest of his family, and was advised to fly into Swisserland: he came and found Mr. de Voltaire, who at first could only pity and relieve him, without daring to judge of the sentence pronounced against the father, mother, and brothers.

Soon after, one of the brothers, who was only banished, likewise came and threw himself into the arms of Mr. de Voltaire, who for more than a month took every possible precaution to be assured of the innocence of the family. But, when he was once convinced, he thought himself obliged in conscience to employ his friends, his purse, his pen, and his credit, to repair the fatal mistake of the seven Judges of Toulouse, and to have the proceedings revised by the King's Council. This revision lasted three years, and it is well known what honour Messrs. de Crofne and Bacquancourt acquired by reporting this memorable cause. Fifty masters of the Court of Requests unanimously declared

clared the whole family of *Calas* innocent, and recommended them to the benevolent justice of his Majesty. The Duke de Choiseul, who never lets slip an opportunity of signalizing the greatness of his character, not only assisted this unfortunate family with money, but obtained for them a gratuity of thirty-six thousand livres from the King.

On the 9th of March, 1765, the *Arret* was signed which justified the family of *Calas* and changed their fate. The 9th of March was the very day on which the innocent and virtuous father of that family had been executed. All Paris ran in crowds to see them come out of prison, and clapped their hands for joy while the tears streamed from their eyes. The whole of that family have been warmly attached to Mr. de Voltaire ever since, who thinks himself honoured by continuing their friend.

It was remarked at that time, that there was not in France a single person who did not rejoice at this decision, except the abovementioned Freron, author of an obscure periodical pamphlet, entitled *Letters to the Countess*, and afterwards *The Literary Year*. This fellow, in his ridiculous productions, dared to throw out some doubts of the innocence of those whom the King, his whole Council, and the public, had amply justified.

Several worthy men engaged Mr. de Voltaire at that time to write his treatise upon toleration, which is esteemed one of his best works in prose, and is become the catechism of all who have either good sense or moderation.

About the same time the Empress Catherine the Second, whose name will be immortal, was giving a code of laws to her empire, which contains a fifth part of the globe; and the first of her laws was to establish universal toleration.

It was the fate of our reclusé on the borders of Swisserland, to vindicate the innocence of those who were accused and condemned in France. The situation of his retreat between France, Swisserland, Geneva, and Savoy, attracted to him more than one unfortunate person. The whole family of *Sirven* condemned to death in a village near Castres, by a set of ignorant and cruel judges, fled for shelter to his estate. Though he was engaged eight years in procuring justice to be done them, he was never disheartened, and at last he succeeded.

We think it is of importance to observe, that one Trinquet, a country Judge, King's Attorney in the jurisdiction where the family of *Sirven* were condemned, gave his sentence in the following terms. *In the name of the King, I require that N. Sirven, and N. his wife, duly arraigned and convicted of having strangled and drowned their daughter, be banished the Parish.* Nothing can better shew the effects which the sale of judicial offices can have in a country.

Since it was the will of his kind stars, to use an expression of his own, that he should be the pleader of causes already lost, it was likewise their will that he should rescue from the flames a woman of St. Omers, called Montbailly, who had been condemned to be burnt alive by the tribunal of Arras. They waited only for the woman's

man's being delivered to carry her to the place of execution: her husband had already expired upon the wheel. What were these two victims? Two eminent examples of conjugal and parental love; two virtuous people in poverty. This innocent and respectable couple had been accused of parricide, and condemned upon proofs which would have appeared ridiculous even to those Judges who condemned the family of Calas. Mr. de Voltaire was so fortunate as to procure an order from the Chancellor Maupeou for a revival of the proceedings. The woman was declared innocent; the husband's reputation restored;—miserable restoration unattended with either satisfaction or recompence! In what a dreadful state is criminal jurisprudence with us! What an infernal train of horrid assassinations from the time the Templars were butchered, to the death of the Chevalier de la Barre! We think we are reading the history of savage nations;—we shudder for an instant, and then set out for the Opera.

The city of Geneva was immersed in troubles which had been increasing from the year 1763. These disturbances determined Mr. de Voltaire to give up his house of *Delices* to Messrs. Tronchin, and to reside constantly at the castle of Ferney, which he had entirely rebuilt, and ornamented with gardens laid out with agreeable simplicity.

The quarrel at Geneva, rose to such a pitch, that on the 15th of February, 1770, the one party fired upon the other; some people were killed, and a number of tradesmen with their families, came and begged an asylum with Mr.
de

de Voltaire, which he immediately granted. He received some of them into his castle, and in a few years had fifty houses of hewn stone built for the rest: so that the village of Ferney, which at the time of his purchase, was only a wretched hamlet tenanted by forty nine miserable peasants, devoured by poverty, disease and tax-gatherers; very soon became a delightful place, inhabited by twelve hundred people, comfortably situated, and successfully employed for themselves and the nation. The Duke de Choiseul protected this infant colony with all his power, so that they were soon in a situation to establish a considerable trade.

One thing worthy of attention is, that though this colony was composed of Roman Catholics and Protestants, it would have been impossible to discover that there were two different religions in Ferney. We have seen the wives of the Swiss and Genevans, with their own hands, prepare three reposoirs * for the host, against the procession at the festival of the holy sacrament. They assisted at the ceremony with the deepest reverence, and Mr. Hugonet, the new Clergyman of Ferney, a man of a tolerating generous spirit, took an opportunity of thanking them in his discourse. When a Catholic was sick, the Protestants went to nurse him, and they met the like assistance, when they had occasion for it.

This was the effect of those principles of humanity, which M. de Voltaire had recommended

* Reposoir is an altar set up in the streets for the Corpus Christi procession.

ed in all his works; but more particularly in his Treatise on Toleration. He always said that we were all brothers, and it was from facts that he reasoned. The *Guyons*, the *Nonottes*, the *Patouilletts*, the *Paulians*, and other zealots, bitterly reproached him with it: but it was because they were not his brethren.

Behold this inscription, DEO EREXIT, upon the church I have built, said he, to those travellers who came to visit him. It is to God, the common father of all men. Perhaps it is the only church we have, which is dedicated to God alone.

More than one sovereign Prince may be reckoned among the number of strangers, that came in crouds to visit Ferney. Several of them, whose letters are in our hands, honoured him with a constant correspondence: the most uninterrupted, was that of the King of Prussia, and his sister Madame Wilhelmina Margravine, of Bareith.

The most interesting period of this correspondence, was that which passed between the battle of Kolin, (on the 18th of June, 1757) when the King of Prussia was defeated, and the affair of Rosbach, where he was victorious, on the 5th of the following November: a rare instance of a correspondence being kept up between a simple man of letters, and a royal family of heroes: of which the following memorable letter is a very eminent proof.

L E T-

L E T T E R

From her Royal Highness the Prince of Bareith,
of the 12th of September, 1757.

“ I was sensibly affected with your letter ;
“ and yours to the King, addressed to my care,
“ had the same effect upon him. I hope you
“ will be pleased with that part of his answer,
“ which concerns you ; but you will be as little
“ satisfied with his resolutions, as I am. I
“ flattered myself with the hope that your re-
“ flections would have made some impression
“ upon his mind, but by the inclosed note,
“ you will see the contrary. If his fate proves
“ unfortunate, nothing remains for me but
“ to follow it. I never prided myself on
“ being a philosopher, but I have done my
“ endeavour to become one. The little pro-
“ gress I have made, has taught me to despise
“ riches and grandeur ; but I have found no-
“ thing in philosophy, which can heal the
“ wounds of the heart, except it be the getting
“ rid of all ills, by ceasing to live. My
“ situation is worse than death. I see the great-
“ est man of the age, my friend and brother,
“ in the most dreadful extremity. I see my
“ whole family exposed to perils and dangers ;
“ my country torn to pieces by merciless
“ enemies : the country where I am at present,
“ perhaps threatened with similar misfortunes.
“ I wish to heaven that these evils which I
“ now mention to you, were to fall upon me
“ alone—I would suffer with steadiness.

“ Pardon

“ Pardon this detail ; but the share you take
 “ in whatever regards me, engages me to open
 “ my heart to you. Alas ! even hope is almost
 “ banished. Fortune when she changes, is as
 “ constant in her persecutions, as she was in
 “ her favours. History is full of these ex-
 “ amples, but I have never seen a situation
 “ like to ours, nor so cruel or inhuman a war,
 “ carried on among civilized nations. If you
 “ knew the situation of Germany and Prussia,
 “ it would draw tears from your eyes. The
 “ cruelties which the Russians commit in
 “ Prussia, make nature shudder. How hap-
 “ py are you in your hermitage, resting under
 “ the shade of your laurels, where you may
 “ deliberately philosophise upon the misconduct
 “ of men ! I wish you all possible happiness
 “ there.

“ If fortune should smile again, you may
 “ depend upon my acknowledgments. I shall
 “ never forget the proofs of attachment which
 “ you may have given me ; my sensibility shall
 “ be my pledge ; I am never a friend by halves,
 “ and I shall always be truly one to brother
 “ Voltaire.

WILHELMINA.

“ Present many compliments to Madame
 “ Denis. I entreat you continue to write to
 “ the King.”

We may see by this affecting and well-written
 letter, what an excellent heart the Margravine
 of Bareith had, and how well she deserved the

encomium bestowed upon her by Mr. de Voltaire, in an ode lamenting her death, which was printed with his other works. But what may be chiefly observed is, the dreadful misfortunes which wars, undertaken upon slight pretences by Kings, bring upon the public; they likewise may see to what they expose themselves, and how unhappy they are in being the cause of misery to whole nations.

Then, and during the whole time of that fatal war, the Recluse of Ferney gave every possible proof of his attachment to the Margravine; of his zeal for the King, her brother, and of his love of peace. He engaged Cardinal Tencin, who had at that time retired to Lyons, to commence a correspondence with the Margravine, in order to bring about the wish'd-for peace. The letters both of the Princess and the Cardinal passed by way of Geneva, a neutral state, and through the hands of Mr. de Voltaire.

After all the misfortunes consequent of the King of Prussia's defeat at Kolin, the resolution taken by that Monarch, to march towards Saxony, near Merzbouurg, and confront the combined armies of France and Austria, that were greatly superior in numbers, while Marechal de Richelieu was at no great distance with a victorious army, will be looked upon as a very singular epoch. That Monarch, in the midst of all his misfortunes, had so much presence of mind, and was sufficiently master of his ideas to make his will in verse. In writing it he did not conceal his misfortunes, but he spoke of them like a philosopher, and looked upon death with
a calm

a calm and steady eye. We have this piece, which is a matchless monument, written entirely by his own hand.

We have a still more heroic monument of this Royal Philosopher;—it is a letter to Mr. de Voltaire of the 9th of August, twenty-five days before his victory at Rosbach.

“ Je suis homme, il suffit, & né pour la souffrance ;
 “ Aux rigueurs du destin j’oppose ma constance.

Enough—I’m man, and therefore born to woes,
 To rig’rous fate my firmness I oppose.

“ But though these be my sentiments, I am
 “ far from condemning Cato and Otho.—There
 “ was not a single glorious moment in the life
 “ of the latter, but that which concluded it.

“ Voltaire dans sons hermitage
 “ Peut s’adonner en paix à la vertu du sage
 “ Dont Platon nous traça la loi :
 “ Pour moi, menacé du naufrage,
 “ Je dois en affronter l’orage
 “ Penser, vivre & mourir en Roi.”

Voltaire in sweet retirement laid,
 Beneath his fav’rite Ferney’s shade,
 May practice Plato’s sacred lore ;
 For me, embark’d on stormy seas,
 No succour nigh, no fav’ring breeze,
 My ship far distant driven from shore.

Though fiercely tumbling wave on wave,
 My shatter’d sides the tempests lave,
 And round my head the wild winds sing ;
 Yet must I meet their fiercest hate,
 Prosp’rous, or adverse be my fate,
 Think, live, die, as becomes a King.
 Nothing

Nothing can be finer or more noble than these last verses. Corneille, in his best days, could not have written any thing better: and when a battle is gained after such verses, the sublime can reach no higher.

Cardinal Tencin, as may be seen by his letters, always continued his secret negotiations for peace, though fruitlessly. It was the Duke de Choiseul who at last began this great and necessary work, which the Duke de Praslin completed; a most important service done to France, already ruined and impoverished.

France was in so deplorable a situation, that of all the Ministers of the Finances, who rapidly succeeded one another during the twelve years of peace, which followed this fatal war, there was not one, that with the best inclination and the most laborious assiduity, could even palliate the wounds of the state. Such was the want of money, that a Comptroller general was obliged, on a pressing occasion, to seize all the cash which the citizens had deposited in the hands of Mr. Magan, the King's Banker. Two hundred thousand livres were taken from our Recluse. It was an enormous loss, but, like a true Frenchman, he comforted himself by the following madrigal, which he composed *extempore* upon receiving the news of his misfortune.

Au tems de la grandeur Romaine
 Horace disoit à Mécène
 Quand cesserez vous de donner ?
 Chez le Welche on n'est pas si tendre.
 Je dois dire mais sans douleur
 A Monseigneur le Contrôleur,
 Quand cesserez vous de me prendre ?

When

When Rome the world in triumph led,
 Thus to Mecenas Horace said,
 When will you cease to give?
 But the good Welch with whom I live,
 I vow are of a different make,
 I ought to say, but without choler,
 An't please you my good Lord Comptroller,
 When will you cease to take?

They did not stop here. The Duke de Choiseul caused a magnificent harbour to be built at Versey, upon the Lemane Lake, commonly called the Lake of Geneva, and having a frigate built there, it was seized in a port of Savoy near the famous *Ripaille*, by some people of Savoy, who were creditors of the undertakers. Mr. de Voltaire immediately redeemed this royal vessel with money out of his own pocket, but has never been able to recover it from government, for the Duke de Choiseul lost all his employments at that time, and retired to his seat at Chanteloup, not only regretted by his friends but by all the people in France, who admired his benevolent disposition, the nobleness of his soul, and did justice to his superior abilities.

Our recluse was tenderly attached to that Nobleman by all the ties of gratitude. There was no kind of favour which the Duke de Choiseul did not readily grant on his recommendation. He made Mr. de la Houliere, nephew of Mr. de Voltaire, a Brigadier in the army. Pensions, rewards, commissions, crosses of St. Louis, were given as soon as asked.

Nothing

Nothing could be more affecting to the man who had been so much obliged by him, who had just established a colony of artists and manufacturers under his auspices. The Colony had begun to be employed very successfully for Spain, Germany, Holland, and Italy, and upon this occasion he thought they would have been ruined; but they were able to support themselves. The Empress of Russia alone, and in the very heat of the war against the Turks, bought watches at Ferney to the amount of fifty thousand livres. There is no end to our astonishment, when we see this Princess at the same time laying out a million of livres in France and Holland for pictures, and some millions for jewels.

She made a present to Mr. Diderot of fifty thousand livres, and with such a pleasing delicacy as greatly heightened the value of the present. She offered to commit the principal care of her son's education to Mr. d'Alembert, with a salary of sixty thousand livres: but neither the state of health, nor the philosophic turn of Mr. d'Alembert, permitted him to accept an employment at Petersburg which was equal to what the Duke de la Vaugion enjoyed at Versailles. She sent Prince *Koussoufsky* to present Mr. de Voltaire with some valuable furs, and a box turned with her own hands, ornamented with her picture and twenty diamonds. It looks like the history of Aboulcassem in the Arabian Nights.

Mr. de Voltaire told her that she had certainly taken all Mustapha's treasures in one of her victories. She replied, "*That with œconomy we are always rich, and that in this great war she*
would

would neither feel the want of men or money." And she has shewn it.

In the mean time Mr. Pigal, the famous Statuary, was employed at Paris in making a statute of our Recluse at Ferney. This compliment was first proposed in the year 1770 by a foreign Lady, to some truly learned men, to make him amends for all the insipid libels and ridiculous calumnies which fanaticism and ignorance had heaped upon him. It was Madame Neker, the wife of the Resident from Geneva, who first conceived this project. She was a woman of a highly cultivated understanding, and if possible, her worth was even superior to her genius. Her idea was eagerly caught at by all her visitants, upon condition that none but men of letters should be subscribers to the undertaking.

The King of Prussia, as a man of letters, to which title and to that of genius surely no man has a better claim, wrote to the celebrated Mr. d'Alembert, and expressed his desire to be among the first to subscribe. His letter of the 28th of July, 1770, is lodged in the archives of the Academy.

" The handsomest monument of Voltaire
 " is that which he hath erected himself, in his
 " works. They will last longer than the dome
 " of St. Peter's, the Louvre, and all those
 " buildings which vanity has consecrated to
 " eternity. When the French language shall be
 " no more spoken, Voltaire will be translated
 " into the language which shall next succeed.
 " In the mean time, while I am filled with the
 " pleasure

“ pleasure which his productions, so various,
 “ and each so perfect in its kind, have given
 “ me, I cannot, without ingratitude, reject
 “ the proposal which you have made to me, of
 “ contributing to the monument which is to
 “ be erected for him as a proof of public gra-
 “ titude. You have only to let me know what
 “ is expected from me;—I will refuse nothing
 “ for a statue which does more honour to the
 “ men of letters who erect it, than it possibly
 “ can to Voltaire. It will be said, that in the
 “ seventeenth century, while so many men of
 “ letters were tearing one another in pieces
 “ through envy, there were some found so
 “ truly noble and generous, as to do justice to
 “ a man whose genius and talents were superior
 “ to every age;—that we deserved to possess
 “ Voltaire : —and our latest posterity will
 “ envy us that singular advantage. The dis-
 “ tinguishing celebrated men, and doing jus-
 “ tice to their merit, is the way to encourage
 “ superior talents. It is the only recompence
 “ of worthy minds, and is justly due to those
 “ who cultivate letters in an eminent degree.
 “ They procure the pleasures of the mind,
 “ which are more lasting than those of the bo-
 “ dy ;—they soften the most savage manners ;
 “ —they spread charms over the whole course
 “ of life ;—they render our existence more
 “ supportable, and death less terrible. Con-
 “ tinue then, Gentlemen, to protect and cele-
 “ brate all those in France who apply to, and
 “ are so happy as to succeed in, these pursuits.
 “ It will be the greatest honour you can possi-
 “ bly do your nation.

FREDERIC.”

The

The King of Prussia did more: he caused a Statue of his old servant to be made in his fine porcelain, and sent it to him with the word *Immortail*, inscribed upon the pedestal. Mr. de Voltaire wrote under it,

Vous êtes généreux. Vos bontés souveraines
Me font de trop nobles présens.
Vous me donnez sur mes vieux ans
Une terre dans vos domaines.

You're generous. Your royal bounty deigns
To croud too noble presents on the past;
Worn out with age, and breathing now my last,
You grant me an estate in your domains.

Mr. Pigal undertook to execute the Statue in France with the zeal of one artist who wished to immortalize another. This adventure, which was singular at that time, will very soon become common. The erecting the statues, or at least the busts of Artists, will become the fashion, like calling out from the pit *The Author, the Author*. But he to whom this honour was done, plainly foresaw that his enemies would be only the more exasperated. He wrote what follows to Mr. Pigal, in a stile perhaps too burlesque.

Monsieur Pigal, vôtre statue,
Me fait mille fois trop d'honneur.
Jean Jaques a dit avec candeur
Que c'est à lui qu'elle était due.
Quand vôtre ciseau s'evertue
À sculpter vôtre serviteur,
Vous agacez l'esprit railleur
De certain peuple rimailleur
Qui depuis si longtems me hue.

L'ami

L'ami Freron le barbouilleur
D'ecrits qu'on, jette dans la rue,
Sourdement de sa main crochue
Mutilera vôte labeur.

Attendez que le destructeur
Qui nous consume & qui nous tue
Le tems, aidé de mon pasteur,
Ait d'un bras exterminateur
Enterré ma tête chenue.
Que feriez vous d'un pauvre auteur
Dont la taille & le cou de grue,
Et la mine très-peu jouflue
Feront rire le connaisseur.
Sculptez nous quelque beauté nue
De qui la chair blanche & dodue
Séduise l'œil du spectateur,
Et qui dans nos sens insinue
Ces doux desirs & cette ardeur
Dont Pigmalion le sculpteur,
Vôte digne predecesseur
Brula, si la fable en est crue.
Son marbre eut un esprit, un cœur;
Ileut mieux, dit un grave auteur;
Car soudain fille devenue
Cette fille resta pourvue
Des doux appas que sa pudeur
Né dérobaient point à la vue.
Même elle fut plus dissolue
Que son pere et son createur.
C'est un exemple tres-flatteur
Il faut bien qu'on le perpetue.

A Statue! what, and wrought by you,
'Tis much, too much above my due.
Candid *Jean Jaques* with frowning stare,
Exclaims—a statue for Voltaire!
When mine's the merit—I alone
Ought to be grav'd in living stone. (*)

Thus

* Jean Jaques Rousseau, of Geneva, in a letter to the Archbishop of Paris, entitled *Jean Jaques to*

Thus hurry'd on by zeal too fervent,
 When you would grace your humble servant ;
 You rouse again the dormant rage,
 Of all the rhymers of the age,
 By whom I've long been persecuted,
 Pelted, defam'd, and hiss'd and hooted ;
 Freron, whose pamphlets you may meet,
 Choaking the kennels in each street,
 With crooked claw will steal upon it,
 And maim your labour in a moment.
 Have patience, wait a few short hours,
 'Till that fell fiend which all devours,
 Time, with my pious pastor's aid,
 In dust my hoary head has laid.

—And after all, what can you make ?
 Your credit, Sir, you rashly stake ;
 An author—of a dwarfish stature,
 By much too mean in limb and feature ;
 With long crane neck, and cheeks so thin,
 They'll force from Connoisseurs a grin.

To please is still the sculptor's duty,
 Then carve us out some naked beauty,
 Whose fair plump charms may please our eyes,
 And take our senses by surprize ;
 Shoot through our marrow lambent fires,
 Kindling those raptures fierce desires,
 With which as ancient stories shew,
 Pygmalion felt his bosom glow ?
 His marble had a soul, a heart,
 Still better, authors grave assert ;
 For soon as life inform'd the mass,
 No marble now—the sprightly lass,
 As she before him naked stood,
 Shew'd plainly she was flesh and blood ;

Boldly

Christopher, modestly says that he is become a man of letters, by his contempt for them. And after begging Christopher to read his romance of his Swiss girl *Eloïse*, who, while unmarried, brought forth an abortion ; he concludes, page 127, that they ought to erect statues for him, in every well regulated state.

Boldly display'd her sweetest charms,
 And hugg'd her maker in her arms.
 Nay with far keener ardours glow'd
 Than those to which her life she ow'd.
 Your powers are as Pygmalion's ample,
 Then propagate the sweet example.

It was not without reason that he said, this unexpected honour, would set all the fanatic writers of the *Pont neuf* * upon him. In writing to Mr. Tiriot, he said, *all these gentlemen deserve statues much better than I do; and I confess that here are some of them, whose effigies ought to be stuck up in the Greve.*†

The Nonnottes, the Frerons, the Sabotiers, and their companions, loudly declaimed: but he who persecuted him with the greatest cruelty and absurdity, was a foreign mountaineer, who was fitter for sweeping chimnies, than directing consciences. This very familiar gentleman wrote to the King of France, in the stile of one crown'd head to another, to beg the favour of him to expel a sick man, of seventy-five years of age, from the house which he built; from the lands which he had cleared, and from a hundred families, who derived their subsistence from him. The King thought the proposal was dishonest and unchristian, and gave orders that the *tatter Grape* might be told so.

Our recluse of Ferney, being sick and without employment, was resolved to be revenged for this petty manœuvre, only by having extreme
 unction

* Answering to our Grub-street,

† The *Greve* is the place of execution for Criminals.

unction administered according to the custom at that time, by way of atchievement. He acted as those people who are called Jansenists do at Paris : he had it signified to his Parson, who was called *Gros*, (an honest drunkard, who has since killed himself by the bottle) by one of the *Verger*s, that the said Parson should come and anoint him in his chamber, without fail, on the first of April. The Parson accordingly came, and remonstrated to him the necessity of first taking the sacrament, and then he would give him as much oil as he pleased. The sick man accepted the proposal ; the communion was brought into the chamber, and on the first of April, in the presence of witnesses, he declared before a notary, *that he forgave his slanderer who had endeavoured to ruin him, but had not succeeded.* The declaration was drawn up in proper form.

After the ceremony, he said, now that I have had the satisfaction of dying like *Guzman* in *Alzira*, I find myself better. The wags at Paris thought the whole an *April errand*.

His enemy, astonished at this adventure, did not value himself upon following the example ; he did not forgive. He did not know what to do but to forge a declaration of the sick man, quite different from the genuine one which had been made before the notary, duly examined and authenticated. In about fifteen days, after a couple of Forgers digested a counter-profession of his faith, but they durst not counterfeit the signature of the man, to whom they had the stupidity to ascribe this piece of savoyard gibberish. Mr.
de

de Voltaire wrote the following letter upon the subject.

“ I am not offended with those people, who
 “ have made me speak the words of holiness, in
 “ a stile both barbarous and impertinent; they
 “ could have expressed my true sentiments but
 “ badly; they might have repeated in their
 “ jargon, what I have so frequently published
 “ in French, but they have not even expressed
 “ the substance of my opinions. I agree with
 “ them; I join in their faith, my enlightened
 “ zeal seconds their ignorance, and I recom-
 “ mend myself to their savoyard prayers. I
 “ only beg the pious Forgers, who digested
 “ the deed of the 15th of April, to consider
 “ that they ought not to counterfeit deeds,
 “ even in favour of the truth. The more the
 “ Catholic religion is true, (as all the world
 “ knows) there is the less need of telling lies
 “ for it. These little liberties which are but
 “ too common, may authorize more dangerous
 “ impositions. People may very soon think
 “ they may be allowed to fabricate false wills,
 “ false donations, and false accusations, for the
 “ glory of God. Most horrid forgeries have
 “ been committed on former occasions.

“ Some of the pretended witnesses confess
 “ that they were suborned, but they were made
 “ to believe that they were doing good. They
 “ have declared, that they only told lies with
 “ a good intention.

“ All this was done no doubt with the same
 “ charitable intentions that the recantations
 “ were

“ were imputed to Messrs. de Montesquieu,
 “ de la Chalotais, de Montclar, and a number
 “ of other people. These pious frauds have
 “ been in fashion about sixteen hundred years ;
 “ but when these good works, go the length of
 “ falsehood, it is risking a great deal in this
 “ world, in expectation of the kingdom of
 “ Heaven.”

While these people were employed in melancholy mischief, our recluse continued chearfully to do the little good in his power, and to fortify the most serious truths by sallies of humour.

He confessed that he carried his raillery too great lengths against some of his enemies.* I was wrong, said he in one of his letters, but having been attacked by these gentlemen for forty years, I have lost my patience these ten years.

The revolution which took place in all the parliaments of the kingdom, in the year 1771, could not fail to affect him, for he had two nephews, one of whom quitted, when the other entered the parliament of Paris. They were both men of distinguished merit and incorruptible probity, but engaged in opposite parties. He continued to love them both equally, and to preserve the same regard for them, but he loudly declared for the abolition of that venality, against which we have quoted the energetic expressions of the Marquis d'Argenson. He greatly admired the scheme of doing justice gratuitously, like St. Louis ; but chiefly he wrote in favour of unfortunate clients, who for four centuries

96 HISTORICAL MEMOIRS

turies had been obliged to come a hundred and fifty leagues from their homes to compleat their ruin in the capital, by losing, or even by gaining their causes. He always manifested these sentiments in his writings, and was steady in his principles without paying court to any one.

Though he was at that time seventy-eight years of age, in one year he entirely new-wrote the *Sophonisba of Mairet*, and composed the tragedy of the *Laws of Minos*. He did not look upon these productions, which he wrote in haste for the Theatre, in his own Castle, as good pieces. The connoisseurs do not find much fault with the *Laws of Minos*; but it must be owned, that those dramatic works which have never appeared on the stage, or that have not continued to be played for a considerable time, serve no other purpose but to swell the heap of pamphlets with which Europe is overloaded;—like those pictures and prints, which if not received into the collections of the curious, remain as if they had never existed.

In the year, 1774, he had a singular opportunity of employing that same zeal which he had the good fortune to display in the fatal catastrophe of the families of Calas and Sirven.

He was informed that there was a young French gentleman of modest merit, and singular good sense, in the King of Prussia's army, at Wesel. This young gentleman was only a volunteer, and had been condemned at Abbeville, with the Chevalier de la Barre, to suffer the punishment of parricides, for not kneeling in
time

time of rain before a procession of Capuchins, who had passed about fifty or sixty paces from them.

To this accusation was added, that of having sung a rakish song of a hundred years old, and repeating Piron's Ode to Priapus. This Ode of Piron's was a lewd flight of a young man, and looked upon as such a venial trespass, that the King of France, Louis XV. hearing that the author was poor, gave him a pension out of his privy purse. Thus he who composed the piece was rewarded by a good King, while they who repeated it, were condemned to suffer the most dreadful punishment, by some inhuman monsters of a village.

Three Judges of Abbeville conducted the prosecution, and the sentence was as follows: That the Chevalier de le Barre, and his young friend, (of whom we have been speaking) should be put to the torture ordinary and extraordinary, their hands be cut off, their tongues torn out with pincers, and their bodies burnt alive.

Of three judges who gave this sentence, two of them were absolutely incompetent. One of them for being the declared enemy of the young people's parents; the other, because having formerly got himself admitted Counsellor, he had since purchased and exercised the business of Attorney in Abbeville; that his principal employment was that of a dealer in bullocks and hogs;-- he had been condemned by the Consuls of Abbeville, and the court of Aides had afterwards declared him incapable of holding any municipal employment in the kingdom.

The third judge, intimidated by the two others, had the weakness to subscribe to their sentence, which was followed by the most poignant and fruitless remorse.

To the surprize and astonishment of all Europe, that still shudders with horror at the deed, the Chevalier de la Barre was executed: his friend was outlawed, having been in a foreign country before the beginning of the prosecution.

This sentence so execrable, and at the same time so absurd, which is an eternal disgrace to France, was much more to be condemned than that by which the innocent Calas was broke upon the wheel; for the judges of Calas were guilty of no other fault than that of deceiving themselves, while the crime of the Abbeville Judges, was their being monsters of cruelty with their eyes open. They condemned two youths to suffer as cruel a death as Ravillac and Damiens, for a levity which only deserved a week's imprisonment. It may be said that, since the massacre of St. Bartholomew, nothing so dreadful has happened. It is melancholy to relate such an instance of brutal ferocity as is not to be met with among the most savage people, but truth obliges us to it. What is chiefly to be observed is, that these horrid acts have been committed for the sake of religion, at a time when the greatest luxury, effeminacy, and unbridled dissipation, prevailed.

Mr. de Voltaire having been informed that the other young person, a victim of the most detestable fanaticism that ever polluted the earth,

was

was in one of the King of Prussia's regiments, he acquainted that Monarch of it, who immediately had the generosity to make him an officer. The King of Prussia enquired particularly about the young gentleman; he found that he had learnt the art of drawing and design without the help of a master; that he was prudent, sensible, and virtuous; and that the whole of his conduct gave the lie to his pretended Judges of Abbeville. The King called him near his person, gave him a company, appointed him an engineer, and honoured him with a pension, and thus by his benevolence wiped away the crimes committed by folly and barbarity. He wrote in the most affecting terms to Mr. de Voltaire to acquaint him with what he had done for this truly valuable and unfortunate young soldier. We have all been witnesses of this horrid affair, so dishonourable for France, and so noble for a royal philosopher. This great example will *instruct* mankind, but will it *correct* them?

Immediately after this, our old man renewed his frozen age, in order to take advantage of the patriotic views of a new Minister, who was the first in France that set out with being the father of the people. The estate which Mr. de Voltaire had chosen in the Pays de Gex, was a stripe of land about five or six leagues in length and about two in breadth, between Mount Jira, the lake of Geneva, the Alps, and Switzerland. This country was plagued with about fourscore *Sbirri** of the revenue, who disgraced their employment,

F 2

* The *Sbirri* are the officers of the Inquisition, and Voltaire uses this term to express the rapacious cruelty of the Tax-gatherers in France.

ployment, and, unknown to their masters, tormented the poor people. The country was in the most dreadful misery, but he was so happy as to obtain a composition from this benevolent Minister, by which this solitude (we dare not say province) was delivered from all vexation; they became free and happy. After this, said he, I ought to die, for I can rise no higher.

However he did not die at that time, but his noble rival and illustrious adversary *Freron* died; and a very droll affair happened upon the occasion. Mr. de Voltaire received an invitation from Paris to be present at the funeral of this poor devil. A female, who was apparently one of the family, wrote an anonymous letter to him, which is in our hands, proposing, in the most serious manner, that he should procure a husband for the daughter of *Freron*, as he had done for the descendant of *Corneille*. She conjured him in the most pressing terms, and informed him, that he might address the Parson of the Magdalen at Paris, for that purpose. Mr. de Voltaire told us, that if *Freron* had written the *Cid*, *Cinna*, and *Polyeuctes*, he would have immediately complied.

The letters which he received were not all anonymous. There was a Mr. Clement, a Servitor, in a college of Dijon, who set himself up for a master in the art of reasoning, and in the art of writing, that came to Paris to live by a trade which may be carried on without having served an apprenticeship;—he turned *libeller*. The Abbé Voisenon wrote upon the occasion,

Zoilus

*Zoilus genuit Mevium, Mevius genuit Giot des Fontaines, Giot autem genuit Freron, Freron autem genuit Clement,** and thus great families degenerate. This Mr. Clement had attacked the Marquis de St. Lambert, Mr. de Lille, and several other Members of the Academy, with a violence which the most irritated client could not have employed, if his whole fortune had been at stake. And for what was all this? for some verses indeed. It was like the learned Doctor in Moliere, who foamed at the mouth with rage, because a man had, in his hearing, said, the form of a hat, and not the figure of a hat. Here follow some lines which Mr. de Voltaire wrote to the Abbé Voisenon.

-
- " Il est bien vrai que l'on m'annonce
 - " Les lettres de maitre Clement.
 - " Il a beau m'écrire souvent,
 - " Il n'obtiendra point de reponse.
 - " Je ne serai pas assez sot
 - " Pour m'embarquer dans ces querelles.
 - " Si ç'eut été Clement Marot
 - " Il aurait eu de mes nouvelles.

Clement, 'tis true, has often writ,
 But not a line shall he receive ;
 I surely should have lost my wit,
 To heed when stupid madmen rave.
 Yet had it Clement Marot been,
 My answer he had doubtless seen.

- " But for Mr. Clement, not Marot, who, in
- " a volume much larger than the *Henriade*,
- " proves

* Zoilus begot Mevius, Mevius begot Giot Des Fontaines, Giot begot Freron, Freron begot Clement.

“ proves to me that the *Henriade* is worth but
 “ little; alas! I have known it these sixty years
 “ as well as he. At the age of twenty-one I
 “ began with the second Canto of the *Henriade*.
 “ I was at that time in the same predicament
 “ that Mr. Clement seems to be in at pre-
 “ sent; I did not know what I was about. In-
 “ stead of writing a large volume against me,
 “ why does not he write a better *Henriade*?
 “ ’Tis so easy a matter!”

There are a sort of tempers, which, having
 once contracted a habit of writing, cannot relin-
 quish it in their most advanced age;—such were
 Huet and Fontenelle. Though our author was
 weighed down with years and disorders, he was
 always chearfully employed. His Epistle to
 Boileau, his Epistle to Horace, the *Taſtics*,
 the Dialogue of Pegasus and the Old Man, John
 who Laughs and Cries, and several other pieces
 of that kind, were written at the age of eighty-
 two. In conjunction with two or three men of
 learning, he wrote three-fourths of *The Questions*
on the Encyclopedie. As soon as each volume
 made its appearance, several editions of it were
 printed, and the whole are very incorrect.

There is a very singular fact relating to the
 article *Messiah*, which shews that the eyes of en-
 vy are not always clear-sighted. That article
 already printed in the great Paris edition, was
 written by Mr. Polier de Bottens, chief Pastor
 of the church of Lausanne; a man truly respect-
 able, both for his virtue and learning. The
 article is sensible, instructive, and of profound
 erudition;—we have the original in the author’s

own

own hand. While it was believed to be written by Mr. de Voltaire, there were a hundred faults found; but when it was known to be the work of a Clergyman, it became truly Christian.

Among the number who fell into this snare, we may reckon the Ex-Jesuit, *Nonotte*. It was the same man who thought fit to deny that there was a little town called Livron, in Dauphiny, besieged by order of *Henry the Third*; who did not know that our first race of Kings had several wives at one time;—who did not know that *Eucherius* was the first author of the fable of the Theban Legion. It was he who wrote two volumes against *the History of the Genius and Manners of Nations*, and who blundered in every page of the two volumes. His book sold, because he attacked a person who was well known.

The fanaticism of this *Nonotte* was so great, that in I don't know what, *philosophical, anti-philosophical, religious Dictionary*, on the article *Miracle*, he assures us that when the *host* at Dijon was stabbed with a knife, it run twenty porringers of blood:—and that another *host* being thrown into the fire at Dôle, skipped away to the altar. Frere *Nonotte*, to prove these two facts, quotes two Latin verses of the president Boivin, of Franchcomté.

*Impie, quid dubitas hominemque Deumque fateri?
Se probat esse hominem sanguine, et igne Deum.*

These two impertinent verses, when rendered into common sense, say, “ Wicked wretch,
“ wherefore

“ wherefore dost thou hesitate to acknowledge
 “ a man—God? he proves that he is man by
 “ the blood, and God by the fire.”

Nothing could be better demonstrated; and upon this proof Nonotte exclaims in extacy; *thus ought we to proceed in regulating our belief of miracles.*

But the good Nonotte, in regulating his belief upon theological ravings, or the reasonings of Bedlam, did not know that there are three-score towns in Europe, where the people give out that the Jews stabbed the *host* with knives, and that blood immediately flowed;—he does not know that even in these days they commemorate a similar adventure at Brussels, and I have heard a curious song upon the subject, when I was there forty years ago.

He does not know the miracle of Goose-street, in Paris, where the inhabitants every year burn the figure of a Swiss at the end of the street, for assassinating the Holy Virgin, and the Infant Jesus;—nor the miracle of the Carmelites, called *Billetes*, and a hundred others of the same kind, celebrated by the dregs of the people, and brought in evidence by the dregs of writers, who would have us give the same credit to these nonsensical tales, as to the miracle at the marriage in Cana, or that of the five loaves.

All these fathers of the church, some coming out of the Bissetre, some out of the tavern, some begging alms from him, were continually sending him either libels or anonymous letters,
 which

which he threw into the fire unopened. His reflections upon the infamous and contemptible profession of these pitiful wretches, who called themselves men of letters, produced that little poetical piece, called *Le pauvre Diable*, (*The Poor Devil*) in which he evidently shewed, that it was a thousand times better to be a footman or porter in a good family, than to drag on a life of indigence in streets, coffee-houses, and garrets, which they can scarcely support by selling libels to booksellers, in which they judge Kings, insult women, govern states, and, without a grain of common sense, abuse their neighbours.

Of late he has shewed a perfect indifference for his own works; about which he had always been little solicitous, and which he never mentioned. They were continually reprinted without his being even acquainted with it. If an edition of the *Henriade*, or his tragedies, history, or fugitive pieces, was almost out of print, another was instantly produced: He frequently wrote to the Booksellers, *Do not print such a number of volumes as my works;—a man cannot reach posterity with such heavy baggage.* They did not hearken to him; they reprinted in a hurry, without consulting him: and what is almost incredible, yet true, they printed a magnificent edition in Quarto at Geneva, without his ever seeing a single page, in which they inserted a number of pieces that were not his, and the real authors of which are very well known.* It was with regard to all these different editions that he said and wrote to his friends, *I look upon myself*

F 5

self

* This edition in quarto offends by the disorder which disfigures several volumes; by making a piece composed.

self as a dead man, whose effects are upon sale.

The chief magistrate, and the principal clergyman of Lausanne, having established a printing-house in that town, they published an edition, which they said was compleat, with the name of London on the title page. These editors have inserted more than an hundred little pieces in prose and verse, that could not come from him, nor from a man of any taste, nor from a gentleman; such as one beginning with

Belle maman soyez l'arbitre,

Which may be found among the small pieces of the Abbè Grecour; and such as the *apothecosis* of Mademoiselle Couvreur, made by a school master of the name of Bonneval; and the *loup moraliste* (*moralising wolf*); and I don't know what sort of an ode, entitled *le vrai Dieu* (*the true God*), which seems to have been the work of a coachman of Vertamon, who turned Capuchin.

These pieces of dullness were carefully collected in the *compleat edition* from the new works of Madame Oudot, the Almanacks of the Muses, the Port-Folio Recovered, and such other works of genius which decorate the *Pont-neuf*, and the Quay of the Theatins at Paris. They may be found in plenty in the twenty-third

composed in 1720 follow one of 1770; by a profusion of a hundred little pieces which do not belong to the author, and are unworthy of the public; and lastly, by a number of typographical errors; yet perhaps the beauty of the paper, the type, and the engravings, may attract the attention of the curious.

third volume of the Lausanne edition. Such trash is only fit for the pastry cooks. The editors have likewise been so obliging as to insert in the title page of these disgusting insipidities, *the whole revised and corrected by the author*, who assuredly had not seen a page of them. It was not thus that *Robert Stephens* printed. The former scarcity of books was greatly to be preferred to the oppressive loads of writings which now over-run London and Paris, and shower in sonnets upon Italy.

When some of his letters were counterfeited and printed in Holland, under the title of *Private Letters*, he parody'd the old Epigram.

“Voilà donc mes lettres secrettes,
 “Si secrettes, que pour Lecteur
 “Elles n'ont que leur Imprimeur,
 “Et ces Messieurs qui les ont faites.”

At last my private letters see,
 My letters never writ by me,
 So private, that none ever read them,
 Save they who printed and who made them.

We are unwilling to say who the worthy gentleman was, who, with a Geneva title page, printed at Amsterdam the *Letters of Mr. de Voltaire to his Friends of Parnassus, with notes critical and historical*. This Editor reckoned the Queen of Sweden, the Elector Palatine, and the Kings of Poland and Prussia, among his friends of Parnassus. Very good friends and a charming Parnassus! Not content with this excessive impertinence, the editor, on purpose to make his book sell, had the knavery to follow
 the

the example first set by Baumelle. He forged several letters which were already known, and among the rest, a letter upon the French and Italian languages, written in 1761 to Mr. *Tovasi Deodati*, in which this same Forger, with the most insipid rudeness, mangles several of the first nobility in France. Happily he lent his own stile to the author in whose name he wrote, on purpose to ruin him. He makes Mr. de Voltaire say, *that the Ladies of Versailles are agreeable Gossips, and that Jean Jacques Rousseau is their little puppy.* Thus it is, that in France we have eminent geniuses at two-pence the sheet, who write letters for Ninon de l'Enclos, Madame Maintenon, Cardinal Alberoni, Queen Christina, Mandrin, &c. The most honest of these *beaux-esprits* was he who said he was busy making reflections of the Duke de Rochefoucault.

We shall now give some genuine letters of Mr. de Voltaire, from his own minutes, which are at present in our hands; and shall only publish such as we imagine may be of general utility.

GENUINE

GENUINE LETTERS

OF

MR. DE VOLTAIRE.

Here follows a faithful COPY of his LETTER upon LANGUAGE, to Mr. TOVASI DEODATI, bearing date the 24th January, 1776, and which has been so shamefully disfigured in a Dutch edition.

SIR,

I AM extremely sensible of the honour you have done me, by sending me your Treatise on the excellency of the Italian Language; it was like sending to a lover an encomium on his mistress.—However, allow me to offer some reflections in favour of the French tongue, which you seem to depreciate a little too much. A man often takes the part of his wife, when she is not treated with sufficient respect by his mistress.

I believe, Sir, that no language can lay claim to perfection;—we may say with regard to them, as to many other things, the ignorant have prescribed laws to the learned.

All

All languages have been originally formed by the uncultivated vulgar.—Workmen have imposed names on their tools.—Savage *Hords* as soon as they assembled, contrived words to express their wants, and after a number of ages were passed, men of genius arose, who made the best use they could of the terms their rude ancestors had by chance established.

In my opinion there are only two languages existing that have a claim to real harmony,—the Greek, and the Latin. In them alone we find a versification that can boast of a genuine measure,—a certain *Rhythmus*, a real mixture of *Dactyls* and *Spondees*, and quantity in the syllables.—The rude inventors of those two languages, had certainly more musical heads, a juster ear, and more delicate organs than other nations.

You have, you say, Sir, long and short syllables in your beautiful Italian language, and so have we in our French; but neither you nor we, nor any other nation, have real *Dactyls* and *Spondees*. Our verses are distinguished by the number, not the quantity of syllables. *La bella lingua Toscana e la figlia primogenita del Latino.* “The beautiful Tuscan language is the eldest daughter of the Latin.” Enjoy your right of seniority, but allow your younger sisters some share in the succession.

I have always respected the Italians as our masters; but you will acknowledge that you have formed excellent scholars. Almost all the European

European languages have a mixture of beauties and faults which balance each other. You have not the melodious and stately terminations of the Spanish words, which are rendered so sonorous by a happy concurrence of vowels and consonants: *los rios, los hombres, las historias, los costumbres*. Nor have you those diphthongs which in our language produce so harmonious an effect;—*les Rois, les Empereurs, les exploits, les histoires*: you reproach us with our *e* mute, as a flat dull sound, which expires on our lips, but to that *e* mute are we principally indebted for the harmony of our prose and our verse. *Empire, couronne, diademe, flamme, tendresse, victoire*: all these terminations leave a sound, which dwells upon the ear even after the word is pronounced, as a harpsichord echoes after the finger is lifted off the keys.

Acknowledge, Sir, that the prodigious variety of those terminations give our language some advantages over yours, the words of which end only with the five vowels, *a, e, i, o, u*, and even the last of these we ought to strike out, for you have not in the whole compass of your language, above seven or eight words that end in *u*.—There remain then only the four sounds, *a, e, i, o*, for the terminations of all Italian words. Do you sincerely think, Sir, that the ear of a foreigner can be pleased with hearing the following verses of Tasso?

—— il Capitano
Che'l grano sepolcro libero di Christo,
Molto egli opro col senno e colla mano.

Do you think such a frequent repetition of the vowel *o*, can be agreeable to any ear not accustomed to it? Compare with this dull uniformity so tiresome to a stranger;—compare with those dry heavy lines, the following simple couplet of Corneille.

Le destin se déclare, et nous venons d'entendre
Ce qu'il a résolu du beau-père & du gendre.

You see that every word has a different termination. Pronounce now these two verses of Homer,

Εξ ἔδη τα πρῶτα διαστήην ἐπισαῖε
Αἰεΐδης τε ἀναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς

Pronounce these verses before a young lady, either of England or Germany, who has the least delicacy of ear, she will prefer the Greek,—she will tolerate the French, and she will be a little disgusted with the uniformity of the Italian terminations. 'Tis an experiment I have often tried.

Your poets, who assisted in forming your language, were so sensible of this radical defect in the termination of the Italian words, that they have cut off the letters *e* and *o*, in which your infinitives, preterites, and nominatives, constantly end. They say *amar'* instead of *amaré*, *noqueron*, for *noquerono*, *la stagion* for *la stagione*, *buon'* for *buono*, *malevol* for *malevole*. You were desirous to avoid a disagreeable sound; and you frequently fall into the error of terminating your verses with the canine letter *r*, which the Greeks never did.*

It

* Surely Mr. Voltaire never read Pindar. See his second Pythic Ode. *Τηλο γισιν ἀνδρῶν Ο'.*

It is acknowledged that the Latin tongue must have long appeared rude and barbarous to the Greeks, from the frequent repetition of *ur* and *um*, and the multitude of proper names which terminated in *us*. We have succeeded better than you in getting rid of this uniformity.—If Rome was anciently filled with Senators and Knights in *us*, we at present meet only with the Cardinals and Abbés in *i*.

You boast, Sir, and with great reason, of the copiousness of your language, but allow that we labour under no scarcity. 'Tis true, there is no Idiom existing which paints all the different shades of ideas. In this respect, all languages are poor; for example, no language can express, by a single word, love founded on esteem, on beauty alone, on similarity of characters, or on constitution; the case is the same with all the passions, all the qualities of our soul: what we perceive most distinctly, it is often impossible to express.

Yet, Sir, do not imagine that in every thing we are reduced to the extreme indigence with which you reproach us. You have given us a catalogue of two columns to shew your own plenty and our poverty. You set on one side *orgoglio*, *alterigia*, *superbia*, and on the other the single word *orgueil*. But, Sir, we have *orgueil*, *superbe*, *hauteur*, *fierté*, *morgue*, *elevation*, *dedain*, *arrogance*, *insolence*, *gloire*, *gloriole*, *presomtion*, *outré cuidance*. * All these words express different

* Pride, haughtiness, spirit, superciliousness, stateliness, disdain, arrogance, insolence, ostentation, conceit, presumption, overbearing.

rent modes of the same passion, in the same manner as your *orgoglio*, *superbia*, *alterigia*, are not always precisely synonymous.

In your inventory of our mendicity, you reproach us with having only one word, *vaillant*, to signify valiant. I know, Sir, that your nation is very valiant when it pleases itself, and when it is the pleasure of others; Germany and France have had the happiness of entertaining in their service, many Italian officers distinguished for their bravery and military skill. *L'italico valor non e ancor morto*. "The Italian valour is not yet extinct."

But if you have *valente*, *prode*, *animoso*, we have *vaillant*, *valeureux*, *preux*, *courageux*, *intrepide*, *hardi*, *animé*, *audacieux*, *brave*, † &c. Of that courage, that bravery, there are many different characters, each of which has its peculiar epithet. We would say that our Generals are valiant, courageous, brave, but we would distinguish that keen, impetuous courage of the General who carried sword in hand all the works of Port-Mahon, which were cut in the living rock; from that unshaken, deliberate, and skilful firmness, with which one of our commanders preserved a whole garrison from the brink of ruin, and performed a march of thirty leagues in the face of an hostile army, composed of thirty thousand fighting men.

We would express in a still different manner the calm intrepidity which the connoisseurs admire

† Valiant, valorous, gallant, courageous, intrepid, hardy, spirited, daring, brave, &c.

mire in the Grand Nephew of the Hero of the *Valteline*, when, after his forces were put to the rout by a panic terror which seized our allies, that General perceiving the regiment of *Diefbach*, and another making head against a victorious army, tho' they were already attacked by the enemy's Cavalry, and severely gauled by their Artillery, singly joined those regiments, praised their *valour*, their *courage*, their *firmness*, their *intrepidity*, their *resolution*, their *steadiness*, their *boldness*, their *spirit*, their *bravery*, their *heroism*, &c. See, Sir, how many terms instead of one. He was afterwards *daring* enough, in defiance of the victorious enemy, to draw off those two regiments, at a slow pace, from the danger into which their gallantry had led them; and still had the *spirit* to bear the reproaches of a multitude always ill-informed. Believe then, Sir, I intreat you, that our language has genius to express, what the defenders of our country have merit to perform.

You insult us, Sir, on the word *ragout*, imagining that we have only that term to express our *messes*, our *dishes*, our *entries*, our *services*. Would to heaven you were in the right, my health would be more robust, but, unhappily, we have terms of cookery enough to fill a whole dictionary.

You boast of two expressions for a *glutton*; but, Sir, deign to pity our *gormandizers*, our *belly-gods*, our *good livers*, our *great eaters*, our *gluttons*.

You

You are only acquainted with the word *learning*, but we have men of *learning*, *erudition* and *letters*, *enlightened*, able and *well instructed*: You will find among us both the word and the thing.

Believe me, every reproach you have cast upon us, is equally unfair with those I have mentioned.—We have no *diminutives*. In the age of Marot, Rabelais, and Montaigne, we had as many as you; but such puerilities appeared to us unworthy of a language ennobled by the Pascals, the Bossuets, the Fenelons, the Polissons, the Corneilles, the Boileaus, the Massillons, the Fontaines, the Bruyers. We have left to Marot, Ronfard, and Dubartas, the burlesque diminutives in *otte* and in *ette*, scarce preserving any but *fleurette*, *amourette*, *fillette*, *grisette*, *grandelette*, *vieillote*, *nabotte*, *villotte*, and even these we employ only in the most familiar style.

Do not imitate *Buon' Matthei*, who in his discourse before the Academy de la *Crusca*, so highly extolls your exclusive advantage of expressing a hamper and a hand-basket, by *corbello* and *corbellino*, we have *corbeilles* and *corbiellons*.

You, Sir, possess much more solid advantages;—your language admits of inversion, and it is easier to compose an hundred good verses in Italian, than ten in French. The reason of that facility is your toleration of the *hiatus*, that gaping of the syllables which is proscribed among us, and all your words being terminated by *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, you have at least twenty times our stock of rhimes,

rhimes, and add to this, your Poets may dispense with rhyme altogether. You are less restricted than we to the Hemistich and Cefura; you dance at liberty and we in chains.

But believe me, Sir, you ought not to reproach our language with roughness or want of prosody, nor with obscurity or dryness. Your own translations of some French works are sufficient to prove the contrary. Besides, peruse what has been written by Messrs. d'Olivet and du Marlais on the method of speaking our language with propriety. Read Mr. Du Clos: observe the force, clearness, and energy, of Messrs. Diderot and d'Alembert; what picturesque expressions are often used by Messrs. Buffon and Helvetius, in works which do not always appear susceptible of the ornaments of style.

I shall conclude this letter, which is already protracted to too great a length, with one reflection.—If languages were first formed by the vulgar, they have been brought to perfection by the excellent productions of men of exalted genius, and the first of all languages is that which can shew the finest compositions.

“ Etalés moins votre abondance,
 “ Votre origine & vos honneurs :
 “ Il ne sied pas aux Grand-Seigneurs
 “ De se vanter de leur naissance.

“ L'Italie instruit la France ;
 “ Mais par un reproche indiscret,
 “ Nous serions forcés, a regret,
 “ A manquer de reconnaissance.

“ Des

" Des longtems sortis de l'enfance,
 " Nous avons quitté les genoux
 " D'une nourrice en décadence,
 " Dont le lait n'est plus fait pour nous.

" Nous pourions devenir jaloux,
 " Quand vous parlez notre langage.
 " Puis qu'il est embelli par vous,
 " Cessez donc de lui faire outrage.

" L'égalité contente un Sage :
 " Terminons ainsi le procès.
 " Quand on est égal aux Français,
 " Ce n'est pas un mauvais partage.

Boast not so much your copious store,
 Your race, the honours you have bore,
 Ill fits it men of worth and name,
 On ancestry to build a claim.

That France from Italy first drew
 Each art she boasts, we own is true ;
 But don't oblige us, with regret,
 Your former favours to forget.

Our nurse decay'd and worn with age,
 No more our rev'rence can engage ;
 Long has our infant state been past,
 Its trifling toys behind us cast.

When Diodati speaks our tongue,
 Each breast might swell with envy stung :
 Cease then injuriously to blame
 What owes you half its charms and fame.

Equality's the Sage's pride,
 Then thus the contest we'll decide ;
 With France an equal rank who gain,
 Have little reason to complain.

L E T T E R II.

From Mr. de Voltaire to the Count de Caylus.
On some pieces of Sculpture, by Bouchardon.

(The date is lost.)

S I R,

YOU transport me with joy and gratitude;—my zeal for the progress of the arts, particularly sculpture and painting, of which however I am only an admirer, is almost equal to your own. Mr. Bouchardon is undoubtedly the French Phidias. His idea of Cupid making a bow out of Hercules's club, shews great genius; but then this Cupid must be of no small stature; he must naturally be in the attitude of a journeyman Carpenter at work, consequently the club and he must be nearly of the same height. Hercules is reported to have been nine feet high, and his club nearly six feet long. If the Sculptor observes these dimensions, how shall we distinguish the infant Cupid, which is the age in which he is always to be represented?—And do you think the deity will make an agreeable figure in the middle of a number of chips which fall from his chisel? Besides, how can it be guessed to be the bow of love, by seeing a part of it issuing from the club? Will the sword at his feet inform us that it is the sword of Mars?—why of Mars more than Hercules? Cupid was long ago represented playing with the arms of Mars, and that has a picturesque effect; but I am afraid Bouchardon's thought is only ingenious.

Painting

Painting and sculpture seem in some measure to resemble music; 'tis impossible to make them the vehicles for wit;—the turn of a madrigal cannot be conveyed to us by the notes of a musician; nor can a sculptor or painter express an allegory; the interpretation of which only amounts to a lively fally. In my opinion, a thought, in order to be fine, ought to be animated by some passion; it ought to be characterized in an unequivocal manner, and above all its expression ought to be as pleasing to the eye, as the idea is delightful to the fancy. Without this it will be said a sculptor desired to characterise love, and made him a sculptor.—If a pastry-cook turned painter, he would represent that deity drawing tarts out of the oven. The thing, in my opinion, would have merit were it pleasing, but the single idea of the callous, which the exercise of sculpture often produces on the hands, might disfigure the lover of Psyche.—To conclude, my grand objection is, that if Mr. Bouchardon has a block of marble large enough to form two figures, it would be a great pity if his work should be spoiled by a large ugly club, or a small disproportionate one.—Perhaps I am wrong:—I certainly am if you condemn me.—But tell me, Sir, what will constitute the beauty of his work? Doubtless the attitude of the god, the nobleness, the beauty of the figure, the rest is no object of sight. Is it not true that a well formed hand, an animated eye, is preferable to all allegories?—I wish our great artist would undertake some work that would give him an opportunity of representing the passions.—Pugot has so exquisitely expressed the passion of grief!—An
Apollo

Apollo who has just killed Hyacinthus!—A Cupid looking at Psyche in a swoon.—A Venus by the side of a dying Adonis.—Such, in my opinion, are the subjects proper to display the beauty of the art in all its branches.—It is very presumptuous in me, Sir, to talk thus before you. I entreat you to pardon my temerity.

I can say nothing as to the beautiful fountain with which our capital is soon to be embellished, except that Mr. Turgot * ought to be perpetual edile and prætor. The Parisians should contribute more to the embellishment of their town, and the destruction of the monuments of Gothic Barbarism; particularly those village fountains with which our city is disfigured. I make no doubt but Bouchardon will make that fountain an excellent piece of architecture; but after all, what effect can be expected from a work reared against the side of a wall in a street, and half concealed from our view by the projecting of a house? What can we think of a fountain furnished with only two cocks, to which the water carriers will throng in crowds to fill their buckets. This is not the plan on which the fountains have been constructed, which add such embellishments to the city of Rome. With what difficulty are we recovered out of our low, barbarous taste? Fountains ought to be built in squares, where those beautiful monuments of architecture might be viewed on every side. But there is not a single square in the vast suburb of St. Germaine. My heart bleeds while I write. Paris is like the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, one part gold, and another part dirt.

G

L E T-

* Father of the Comptroller General

L E T T E R III.

From Mr. CLAIRAUT to Mr. DE VOLTAIRE,
dated Paris, 16th August, 1759.

S I R,

THE friendship with which you formerly honoured me is never out of my thoughts, as I look upon it to be one of the most flattering distinctions I ever obtained. If I have long abstained from soliciting new testimonies of it, I beg you will attribute my forbearance only to an apprehension of depriving you of the least portion of that time with whose value all Europe is acquainted. That apprehension, so just on occasions which determine the common run of mankind, would be ill placed at a time when it is possible to communicate some reflections on points proper to engage our attention; and the vast variety of your knowledge prevents you from thinking a correspondence on any literary subject dry or sterile.

I therefore imagine that your zeal for the Newtonian system, which you first established in France, by your elegant exposition of its principles, will engage you to cast a look upon my latest attempts to contribute to its advancement.

What I mean is to fix the return of the Comet predicted by Halley, which I have performed by an application of my general theory of the irregularities in the motions of the celestial bodies, produced by their mutual action upon each other. I here subjoin the memoir upon that subject,

subject, which I read at our public meeting last St. Martin's day. As it has been attacked with great acrimony in several journals, I thought it expedient to answer my critics, before the publication of my whole theory. I have the honour of submitting to your judgment this second memoir, as well as the first. When the whole work is printed, it shall be presented with the same speed.

I am, with the highest esteem, and that respect which is its necessary consequence,

S I R,

Your most humble,

and most obedient servant,

CLAIRAUT.

L E T T E R IV.

Answer from Mr. DE VOLTAIRE, to Mr. CLAIRAUT's Letter.

S I R,

YOUR letter has given me pleasure equal to the esteem with which I am inspired by your works. Your contest with the Geometricians on the subject of the Comet, seems to me the war of the Gods in Olympus; while upon earth we have a battle between dogs and cats.—I am frightened when I reflect upon the immensity of your labour. I remember that formerly, when I applied to the Newtonian Theory, I never re-

tired from study without finding my health impaired:—my organs cannot bear so much application as your's. You was born a Geometrician, and it was only chance that made me a disciple of Newton. Your last work must certainly do honour to France. It is impossible the English should have said every thing. Newton partly founded his laws upon those of Kepler, and you have improved upon those of Newton. 'Tis certainly an admirable discovery, to be able to determine the anomalies caused by the large Planets in the course of the Comets. Our fathers, the Greeks, only knew those stars by the quality of being *hairy*, according to the etymology of their name, and mischievous, as we know Clodion the hairy; but you have subjected them to calculation equally with the other Planets of the solar system. However, a man must be very hard to please, who would insist upon the return of a Comet being predicted to a minute, in the same manner as a solar or lunar eclipse. In those immense distances, and in the complication of causes by which the return of a Comet may be accelerated or retarded, we must content ourselves with something *near* the truth. Besides, can we know precisely the quantity of matter in Jupiter and Saturn? To me it appears impossible. I should think, if you were allowed a month's usance on the return of a Comet, as is allowed on bills of exchange that come from very remote countries, the favour would not be very great. But when it is acknowledged, that you do honour to France and to human nature, you receive no more than what is strictly your due. Would to Heaven that our friend Moreau Maupertuis had cultivated

cultivated his art like you; that he had confined himself to predict the return of Comets, instead of elevating his soul to prophecy, dissecting the brains of giants to investigate the nature of the soul, incrusting people with rosin, in order to cure them of all diseases, persecuting Kænig, and dying in the arms of two Capuchins!

To conclude this subject, I am sorry that you distinguish by the name of Newtonians, those who have seen the truths of Newton's discoveries: Geometricians might, with as great propriety, be called Euclidians. Truth has no party name; error may admit epithets of raillery: We say *Jansenists*, *Molinists*, *Quietists*, *Anabaptists*, to designate the different sorts of the blind.—Sects have names, and truth is—Truth.

Heaven bless the Printer, who put the *altercations* of the Comet, instead of the alterations! He was more in the right than he was aware: every truth produces *altercations*.

I too, in my turn, have good reason to complain of those who have charged me with being an enemy to my country, because I was the first Frenchman that made a fair transcript of the system of Newton,—*now Newton was an Englishman*.—But I have received so many favours of the same kind from other hands, that this escaped me in the croud.

At last I have given over measuring any *curves*, except those described by my newly-invented sowing machines, at the extremity of their Radii:

dii: the result is—a little wheat. But while I was sweating blood and water at Paris, in composing Epic Poems, Tragedies, and Histories, I reaped only tares. The culture of lands is more pleasing than the cultivation of letters: I find more good sense, and much more honesty in my labourers and vine dressers, than in the literary pedlars.

I cultivate the earth,—to that we must return at last. I have produced some plenty in the most pleasant, and the poorest country I ever beheld. It is a pretty experiment in the philosophy of nature, to make four ears of corn grow where she gave only two. The academies of Ceres and Pomona, are well worth the others.

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas
Fortunatus et ille Deos qui novit agrestes.

L E T T E R V.

To Mr. DE LA NOUE, Author of the Tragedy of
Mahomet II.

S I R,

YOUR Tragedy came to Cirey just as the Kænigs and the Bernouillis set out from it.—The great truths are leaving us, but in their stead, succeed grand sentiments and fine verses, which are fully equivalent to truths.—I believe you are the first among the moderns who have united the professions of Actor and Tragic Poet; for Latuillierie, who gave *Hercules* and *Soliman*, under his own name, was not their author; and besides those two pieces are now as tho' they had never been. Do you know the Epitaph of that Latuillierie?

Ci git un Fiacre nommé Jean
Qui croyait avoir fait Hercule & Soliman.

The honest Carman John here lies,
Who dreamt he wrote two Tragedies:

The double merit of being (if I may venture the expression) at once the painter and the picture, was never held in honour except in ancient Greece; among that happy people, to whom we are indebted for all the arts, who rewarded and honoured talents of every kind, whom we neither imitate nor esteem as we ought.—Your work sparkles with flights of genius, and strokes of fancy:—’tis almost of a new kind. It is true, the language of tragedy ought not to be too bold; but on the other hand, have not the French poets been often somewhat timid? It is readily granted, that a polite courtier, or a young Princess, ought to express their sentiments only in an easy graceful stile, but in my opinion, some foreign heroes may assume a tone more lofty, more sublime, *major e longinquo*. I should choose to hear from the mouth of Mahomet the second, a language resembling that of Mahomet the Prophet, bold, metaphorical, and full of images.—Such superb ideas are proper for their characters, and it was in that style they actually spoke. It is said that the Conqueror of Constantinople, on entering the Church of St. Sophia, which he had just converted into a Mosque, repeated two sublime verses of the Persian Sadi.—*The Imperial Palace is fallen,—the birds ominous of carnage utter their cries on the towers of Constantinople.** It is a groundless objection that such beauties of dic-
tion

* If we may believe Cantemir, the verses here alluded to were an extempore Distich, pronounced by

tion are peculiar to epic poetry ; they who speak in that manner, know not that Homer's style was imitated by Sophocles and Euripides. Those passages in the epic style, artfully interwoven with other more simple beauties, are like those flashes of lightning which we sometimes see inflame the horizon, and mix with the soft and steady lustre of a serene evening.

The Greeks, the Latins, the Arabians, the Italians, the English, the Spaniards, all object to us that our poetry is too prosaic.—I do not desire a Poët to pass the limits of nature, but to strengthen and embellish it.—Who admires more than I, the pieces of illustrious Racine? Who can repeat more of them from memory? But should I take it amiss if Bajazet, for example, sometimes express himself in more elevated language?

[Here follow some detached lines of Racine's Bajazet, which the Translator has omitted, as they contain nothing interesting, or indeed intelligible to the English reader. He then goes on.]

Tell me, Sir, if from the style in which the whole part of that Turkish Prince is written, you can discover him to be any other than a Frenchman, who calls his Turkish mistress *Madame*, and expresses himself in elegant harmonious language? Do not you wish for something more

Mahomet on his entering the Imperial Palace. The words in the original are, "Perde daré mikuined her
"kyfr Caifar ankebut Bumi neubit mizienedber ki-
"umbeti Efrasiyab." *The Spider has wove her web in the Imperial Palace, the Owl has sung her watch-song on the towers of Efrasiyab.* See his History of the Othman Empire.

more masculine, more lofty, more animated in the expressions of this young Ottoman, who sees himself reduced to the alternative of choosing *Roxana* and an empire, or *Atalida* and death? At the first representation of *Bajazet*, *Peter Corneille* delivered his sentiments nearly in the following words, to an old man, from whom I had the anecdote. " 'Tis beautiful, 'tis pathetic, but the speaker is still a Frenchman." You are sensible, Sir, that this slight reflection cannot, in the least, diminish the respect, which every lover of the French tongue ought to bear the name of Racine. The greatest admirers of Raphael and Poussin could wish these painters had been more masters of the art of colouring. In general that meagreness, so common in the French versification, that total want of grand ideas, is in some measure the consequence of the restraint we labour under, in the choice of our phrases and of our rhimes.—We should be bolder, and rhyme only to the ear. In my opinion, we ought to reflect that the ear can only judge of sounds, not of the figure of characters. Obstacles ought not to be unnecessarily multiplied ;—such superfluous restraints cut off a number of beauties. We ought to be bound by strict laws, not chained by vile slavery.—The English are of this opinion.—But that I may not draw out my letter to an immoderate length, I shall here break off my remarks upon style. Besides I have a great deal to say on the story which makes the subject of your piece. I do not know any more difficult to be treated ; it is neither conformable to history, nor consistent with nature.

One Bandelli, a Monk, took it into his head to disfigure the history of the great Mahomet

the second, by a multitude of incredible fictions.—Among the rest, he inserted the fable of the death of *Irene*, and he has been copied by twenty authors. Yet it is certain that Mahomet never had a mistress known among Christians, by the name of *Irene*:—that the Janisaries never mutinied against him, either on his wife's account or any other cause; and that that prince, as prudent, as wise, as politic, as he was intrepid, was incapable of committing this action of a frantic Idiot, with which he has been so ridiculously reproached in our histories.—This tale must be ranked with that of the fourteen *Icoglans*, whose bellies, it is pretended, he caused to be ript open, in order to discover which of them had eaten his figs or his melons. Conquered nations always impute the most horrid and absurd actions to their conquerors; 'tis the revenge of fools and slaves.

While I was thus employed in writing the history of Charles XII. I found it necessary to consult some historical works concerning the Turks. Among the rest, I lately read the history of the Othman Empire, written at Constantinople, by Prince Cantemir, Vaivode of Moldavia. Neither he, nor any Turkish or Arabic Author, deigns even to mention the fable of *Irene*; he contents himself with representing Mahomet as the greatest and wisest man of his age. He shews that Mahomet having made himself master of one half of Constantinople by an assault, which was given by a mistake, and having received the other by capitulation; religiously observed the treaty, and even preserved the

the greatest part of the churches of the other half of the city, which subsisted three generations after him.

But, that he wanted to marry a Christian, that he murdered her, &c. these are things never were thought of in his own times. I make these observations not as a Poet, but an historian; I am far from condemning you. You have followed the popular prejudice, and popular prejudice is enough for a Painter and a Poet. What would have become of Virgil and Horace, had they been captiously questioned on the authenticity of their facts? A falsehood which produces a striking situation on the Stage, is in that case preferable to all the archives in the universe.

L E T T E R VI.

Answer to the Duke DE BOUILLON, who wrote a letter in verse to him, on the edition of Corneille's works, published for the benefit of that great man's grand-daughter.

I SEE, my Lord, that you stand exactly in the predicament of the Marquis de la Fare, who nearly at your age began to feel his genius for poetry rouse from its slumber; a time of life when some more valuable talents were on the point of suffering a little decay, and putting him in mind that there were pleasures different from those he had hitherto enjoyed.

The theme of his first poem was Love; the Abbé Chaulieu was the subject of the second.—

Your

Your first verses are addressed to me; you was wrong, but I am the more indebted to you.— You tell me that I have triumphed over my enemies; but 'tis you that make me triumph.

Aux pieds de mes rochers, aux creux de mes vallons,
 Pourrais-je regretter les rives de la Seine ?
 La fille de Corneille écoute mes leçons ;
 Je suis chanté par un Turenne.
 J'ai pour moi deux grandes maisons^e
 Chez Bellone & chez Melpomene :
 A l'abri de ces deux beaux noms,
 On peut négliger les Frérons,
 Ou rire tout haut de leur haine.
 C'est quelque chose d'être heureux ;
 Mais c'est un grand plaisir de le dire à l'envie,
 De l'abattre à nos pieds, & d'en rire à ses yeux.
 Qu'un souper est délicieux,
 Quand on brave, en buvant, les griffes de l'harpie !
 Que des frères Berthier les cris injurieux
 Font une plaisante harmonie !
 Que c'est pour un amant un passe-tems bien doux
 D'embrasser la beauté qui subjugue son ame !
 Et d'affubler encor du sel de l'épigramme
 Un rival facheux & jaloux !
 Cela n'est pas chrétien ; j'en convien avec vous ;
 Mais les gens le sont-ils ? Le monde est une guerre :
 On a des ennemis en tout genre, en tout lieux ;
 Tout mortel combat sur la terre :
 Le Diable avec Michel combattit dans le Cieux.
 On cabale à la cour, à l'église, à l'armée :
 Au parnasse on se bat pour un peu de fumée,
 Pour un nom, pour du vent : & je conclus au bout
 Qu'il faut jouir en paix ; & se moquer de tout.

At the foot of my rocks where my deep valleys bend,
 Should I sigh for the banks of the Seine ?
 See Corneille's descendant my lessons attend,
 Hark, I'm sung by a noble Turenne.

While

While shelter'd by names so deservedly dear,
 To Bellona and Tragedy's Queen,
 I may view spiteful Freron's cabal without fear,
 Or laugh at their malice and spleen.

Wifest fages have said, and right plain is the case,
 To be happy is more than a dream ;
 But to tell it to envy, and laugh in her face,
 That's certainly bliss in extreme.

To quaff off our cups while the foul harpies grin,
 Gives our supper additional zest :
 The twin-brother Berthiers vile clamours and din
 Are music that heightens our feast.

How sweet for a lover the nymph to caress,
 Who has ravish'd his soul with her charms !
 Of a rival she hates then to mock the distress,
 And jest at his jealous alarms.

The proceeding, I grant, cannot strictly be squar'd
 By the rules our religion has given ;
 But on earth all are foes, and e'en war was declar'd
 'Twixt the Devil and Michael in heaven.

They intrigue in the army, the church, and the court,
 At Parnassus all concord is broke,
 Not for riches or grandeur, but what makes the sport,
 For a name, breath, a vile puff of smoke.

Thus then I conclude that in peace we enjoy
 Those blessings that fortune has lent ;
 Nor let spleen, spite, or passion, our pleasure destroy,
 But freely to laughter give vent.

L E T T E R VII.

To the Duke DE LA VALIERE, Grand Falconer
on Urceus Codrus.

YOUR procedure, my Lord Duke, is conformable to the rules of ancient chivalry; you take arms in defence of a man who has exposed himself to peril in your train; but the slight mistake into which you have led me, serves to display your profound erudition. Few Grand Falconers would have *unearthed* the *Sermones festivi*, printed in 1502. Raillery apart, 'tis an exploit worthy your magnanimity to plant yourself in the breach in my stead.

You told me in your first letter, that *Urceus Codrus* was a great preacher, in your second you inform me, that he was a great libertine, but however he was not a Cordelier. You ask pardon of St. Francis d'Assise, and the whole seraphic order for the mistake into which you led me; I take the penance upon myself, but it still remains a certain truth that the *mysteries* represented at the *Hotel de Bourgogne* were much more decent than the generality of the sermons in the sixteenth century.—It is upon that point the question turns.

Let us put whom we will in the place of Urceus Codrus, and we shall gain our cause. There is not to be found in the mysteries, a single expression alarming to modesty or piety.—It is impossible that a society of forty persons, who compose and act pieces on sacred subjects in
French,

French, should agree to disgrace their performances with indecency, which would disgust the public and shut up the theatre. But an ignorant preacher who composes in his closet, and is an utter stranger to good breeding, may interlard his sermons with a few brutal expressions, especially when he preaches in Latin. Such for example were those of the Cordelier Maillard, which doubtless make a part of your rich and immense library. Look into his sermon for the second Thursday in Lent, and you will see that he thus apostrophises the Counsellors wives who wore embroidery : *You say that you are clad according to your conditions ; all the Devils in Hell fly away with your conditions and you too, my Ladies. You will say to me perhaps, our husbands do not give us this gorgeous apparel, we earn it by the labour of our bodies ; thirty thousand Devils fly away with the labour of your bodies, my ladies.*

I give you only this passage from Maillard, that I may spare your modesty ; but if you have a mind to take the trouble of searching for others still stronger in the same author, you will find some worthy of Urceus Codrus. Fathers André and Menot were very famous for the turpitude of their expressions : it is owned that the pulpit was not always sullied with obscenities : but for a long time the sermons were in nothing superior to the mysteries of the *Hotel de Bourgogne*.

It must be acknowledged, that the Clergymen of the pretended reformed religion were the first in France who inserted into their discourses any
portion

portion of rationality. The cause was owing to men being obliged to reason when they desire to change universally opinions already received. But still they were far from true eloquence. The pulpit, the bar, the theatre, philosophy, literature, theology, every species of composition among us, was with very few exceptions, in a state much inferior to the pieces played at the fair at present.

Universal good taste did not establish its empire till the age of Louis XIV.—'Twas this determined me to give a slight sketch of that glorious period, and you have remarked that in that history, the age is my hero, even more than Louis XIV. himself, whatever respect and gratitude we may owe to his memory.

It is true, that in general our neighbours were nearly in the same predicament with ourselves. How is it possible that men who are daily preaching should continue to preach so ill! How can it be accounted for, that even the Italians who had so long emerged from barbarism, in almost every other respect, yet when they mounted the pulpit, degenerated into mere Harlequins in surplices, while Tasso's Jerusalem equalled the Iliad, and Orlando Furioso surpassed the Odyssey?—Pastor Fido was a poem of a kind unknown to the ancients;—and Raphael and Paul Veronese performed in reality what is imagined of Zeuxis and Apelles.

Doubtless, my Lord Duke, you have perused the history of the Council of Trent; I believe there is not a Duke or Peer in France but reads
some

some sessions of it every morning.--You have certainly remarked the sermon preached by the Bishop of Bitonto at the opening of the Council.

He begins with proving the Council to be necessary :

1. Because several Councils have deposed Kings and Emperors.

2. Because in the *Æneid* Jupiter assembles a Council of the Gods.

3. Because when God created man, and confounded the language of the builders of Babel, he set about these works as if resolved on in Council.

He afterwards asserts, that all the Bishops ought to assemble in Trent, as in the Trojan Horse. And

Lastly, That the gate of the Council is the gate of Paradise, whence flow living waters, with which all the Bishops ought to water their hearts, even as parched lands are watered ; otherwise the Holy Spirit would open their mouths, as he did the mouths of Balaam and Caiphas.

Such was the sermon preached before the States General of Christendom. What divine prejudice in favour of a council ! The sermon of St. Anthony of Padua to the fishes, is still more famous in Italy than that of Mr. de Bitonto. We may then excuse our Friar Andrew and our Friar Garasse,

rasse, and all our Jack-pudding preachers of the 16th and 17th centuries, if they were no better than their masters the Italians.

But from what source sprung this absurd barbarism which so universally overspread Italy in the time of Tasso; France in the time of Charon and Montagne; England in the age of Bacon? How came it about that those men of genius did not reform their age? The colleges in which the youth were educated, are to blame for that, and the monkish and theological spirit which finished what the colleges had sketched. A genius like Tasso read Virgil and produced the *Jerusalem*. A Machiavel read Terence and produced the *Mandragore*; but what Monk, what Doctor, read Cicero and Demosthenes? An unhappy scholar, stupified by conning John Despauter's grammar four long years, and afterwards crazed by maintaining a thesis *on the universal, on the part of the thing, or on the part of the thought*, and upon the Categories, publicly received his cap and his credentials of insanity, and then went to preach before an auditory, three-fourths of whom were greater idiots and worse educated than himself.

The people listened to these theological farces with necks outstretched, eyes fixed, mouths open; in the attitude of children listening to stories of witches.

The same spirit which led them to the drolleries of the *Foolish Mother*, drew them to those sermons, and they were the more assiduous in their attendance, as the entertainment cost them nothing.

nothing. For, lay an imposition upon masses, as we proposed in the minority of Louis XIV. and not a single person would hear mass.

It was not till near the time of Coffeteau and Balzac that a few preachers ventured to give rational, though dull discourses;—in a word, Bourdaloue was the first who displayed any share of eloquence in the pulpit. To confirm my assertion, I shall here set down the testimony of Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, who says in his memoirs, that when on his travels in France, he was filled with astonishment at Bourdaloue's sermons; and that the French preacher had reformed the English, as well as those of his own nation.

Bourdaloue was almost the Corneille of the Pulpit, as Massillon has since been its Racine:—not that I put an act half profane on a level with a Ministry almost sacred; nor that I compare the moderate difficulty of composing a good sermon, to the inexpressibly arduous task of writing a good tragedy: but I say that Bourdaloue attempted to imitate the close, nervous, argumentative style of Corneille; and Massillon studied to be as elegant in prose as Racine was in verse.

It is true that Bourdaloue, as well as Corneille, was frequently reproached with having too much of the pleader, with aiming rather at proving his point than affecting his audience, and with adducing sometimes weak proofs.—On the contrary, Massillon thought it better to paint than to move;—he imitated Racine as closely as he could be imitated in prose, but all the while preaching that dramatic authors were damned:
for

for it is expedient that every apothecary should extol his own unguent, and damn his neighbour's. His style is pure, his pictures pathetic.

The misfortune of sermons is, that they are too often declamations on contrary sides of the same question. The same man who last Sunday affirmed that there was no felicity in grandeur, that crowns are thorns, that courts are only filled with men whose misery rises in proportion to their rank, that joy is only spread on the face of the poor; next Sunday preaches that the people are condemned to affliction and tears, and that the great are plunged in dangerous delights.

In Advent it is said that God is incessantly employed in the care of supplying all our wants; and in Lent, that the earth is cursed. These common-place topics carry them on to the end of the year through a series of flowery, dull phraseology.

In England the preachers have taken another turn, which would by no means be suitable to us. Clarke's collection of sermons is the most profound book of metaphysics that ever was written. People would say that he preached only for philosophers; and even those philosophers might, at the end of each period, have required of him a long explanation. *And the Frenchman in London, who never had any thing proved to him, would soon have left the preacher.*—His collection makes an excellent book, which very few people are capable of understanding. What a difference between ages and nations! And what a distance from the Friars. Garasse and André, to the Clarkes and the Maffillons!

My

My study of history has been constantly attended with this profitable reflection, that the age in which we live is, of all others, the most enlightened, notwithstanding our wretched books, and the multitude of insipid periodical pamphlets, as it is the happiest, notwithstanding our transitory calamities.—For what man of letters is there but knows that we must date the rise of good taste in France from the time of *Cinna* and the *Provincial Letters*? And who that has the least tincture of historical knowledge, can assign a happier time from the days of Clovis, than the period elapsed since Louis XIV. took the reins into his own hands, to the moment I have the honour of speaking to you? I defy the most testy of mankind to tell me what age he would prefer to our own.

We must be just;—it must be agreed, for instance, that a geometrician of twenty-four, knows much more of the science than Des Cartes; that a country curate preaches more rationally than the grand almoner of Louis XII. The nation is better informed, style in general has been improved, consequently our minds are now better formed than they were formerly.

You will tell me that the age is now decaying, and that at present genius and talents are much more scarce than they were in the glorious times of Louis XIV. Yes, genius sinks, and naturally will sink, but our lights are multiplied? a thousand painters in the time of Salvator Rosa were not worth Raphael and Michael Angelo; but the thousand middling painters formed by those great men,

men, composed a school infinitely superior to what they found established in their days.

At present, when our fine age is drawing to a close, we have neither a Maffillon, a Bourdaloue, a Bossuet, nor a Fenelon, but the dullest of our present preachers is a Demosthenes in comparison of those who filled our pulpits from the time of St. Remi to the days of Friar Garasse.

There is a greater distance from the least of our tragedies to the pieces of Jodelle, than from the *Athalie* of Racine, to the *Maccabees* of La Motte, and the *Moses* of Abbé Nadal. In one word, with regard to all the productions of genius, our artists are far inferior to those who lived at the beginning of the great age, and in its best days; but the nation is now superior to what it was then. It is true that we are overflowed with a deluge of pitiful pamphlets, and mine help to make up the stream; but they may be considered only as a swarm of gnats and caterpillars, that prove the abundance of fruits and flowers: you never see these insects in barren lands;—and remark, that in the immense croud of those little pieces, all effaced by one another, and all at the end of a few days precipitated into eternal oblivion, there is sometimes more taste and delicacy, than you could find in all the volumes written before the *Provincial Letters*.

So rich is our present stock of genius, compared with an indigence of more than twelve hundred years.

If you now examine our manners, our laws, our government, you will find my account to be just. I date from the moment that Louis XIV. assumed the reins, and I ask the most peevish malecontent, the most gloomy panegyrist of past ages, if he will dare to compare the time in which we live, to the days when the Archbishop of Paris went to the Parliament with a poignard in his pocket? Will he prefer the preceding age when the Prime Minister was pistolled in the Court of the Louvre, and his wife condemned to be burnt, as a Witch? Ten or twelve years of the reign of the great Henry IV. appear to be happy, after forty years of abominations and horrors, which make the hair stand on end; but during the few years which that best of Princes employed in healing our wounds, we still bled in every limb! the poison of the league continued to affect our minds; families were divided; the manners were savage; fanaticism prevailed every where, except at Court. Trade was begining to spring up, but its advantages were not yet perceptible: society was destitute of whatever could make it pleasing, and the towns were without police: men in general were in want of every thing that could render life agreeable; and to compleat the misfortune, Henry IV. was detested.—That great man said to the Duke of Sully, *They do not know me, they will regret me.*

Travel back thro' a hundred thousand murders, committed in the name of God;—over the ruins of our towns laid in ashes, to the time of Francis I. you see Italy stained with our blood,

blood, a King prisoner in Madrid, the enemies in the midst of our Provinces.

Louis XII. had the name of *Father of the People*, and that title has been confirmed to him by the voice of posterity; but the children of that father were very unhappy, and he was so himself driven out of Italy, duped by the Pope, vanquished by Henry VIII. and forced to pay a sum of money to the Conqueror, for the privilege of becoming his brother-in-law. He was a good King of an unpolished people, without money, without arts, and without manufactures. His capital was only a confused collection of houses, built of wood, straw, and plaister, and almost all covered with thatch. 'Tis, doubtless, better to live under a good King, who rules over an enlightened and opulent nation, tho' malignant and censorious.

The farther back you go, the more savage you will find every thing; and hence it is our history is so disgusting, that it has been found necessary to compose chronological abridgements of it in columns, where every thing necessary may be found, and every thing useless is omitted, in order to render it supportable to such of our countrymen as are desirous to know in what year the Sorbonne was founded, and those curious persons who doubt whether the equestrian statue in the Gothic Cathedral of Paris was erected for *Philip de Valois*, or *Philip the Handsome*.

Let us acknowledge the truth;—we have existed only about six-score years: Laws, police,
military

OF MR. VOLTAIRE. 145

military discipline, commerce, marine, the fine arts, magnificence, genius, taste, all began with Louis XIV. and several useful arts are yet but on the road to perfection.

This is what I wanted to insinuate, when I said that in former ages, barbarism universally prevailed among us, and even in the pulpit, as every where else.

Urceus Codrus was not worth speaking of so long to you, but he has furnished me with some reflections which may be useful, if you will have the goodness to new-mould them.

L E T T E R VIII.

From Mr. L——, Counsellor of the Parliament of Paris, to Mr. DE VOLTAIRE.

S I R,

Paris, 19th Feb. 1767.

I willingly conform to a very laudable custom, which I see pretty generally established, viz. that young authors transmit to you a copy of their works, and court the honour of obtaining a place for their productions in your library.

It is very natural, that the first fruits of a tree should be gathered by the hand which contributed most to fix its roots. The progress of reason and of taste among us, is almost entirely your work.—They who have profited by it, cannot dispense from testifying their gratitude to you.

H

The

The protection given to literature by our Chancellor, is worth to them a copy of every new publication.—The same homage is due to you by the same title.

Le Dieu du goût, ce Dieu sensible & delicat,
 Dont vous avez si bien fait connaître l'Empire,
 Vous a remis les sceaux de cet état.
 Malgré les cris de la satire
 Il vous en a nommé le premier magistrat.
 Ce poste là pour la finance,
 Ne vaut tant que je crois,
 Que la garde des sceaux de France.
 Et ce n'est pas la seule différence
 Qui distingue ces deux emplois.
 Chacun peut se croire capable
 De bien garder ces derniers sceaux.
 Aussi voit-on à ce poste honorable.
 Pretendre à chaque instant des concurrens nouveaux.
 Mais ici le cas est tout autre,
 Vous n'aurez jamais de rivaux
 Assez hardis pour demander le vôtre.

The God of taste whose Empire you maintain
 Confirm his sceptre and extend his reign:
 For those high services he thought it fit
 To you his seals to trust, as sovereign judge of wit;
 'Tis true indeed perhaps the seals of France,
 Sooner than those, your fortune might advance;
 But them each blockhead thinks he well can bear,
 Crouds throng on crouds the gainful post to share;
 Your office too is view'd with envious eyes,
 But envy's self to you must yield the prize.

It is true that you are thus exposed from time to time to troublesome messages, and the perusal of very dull performances, but I suppose you
 use

use the privilege of other Chancellors, and take care not to read all the petitions presented to you, and should you even think yourself in conscience obliged to it, after all it would be only one of the inconveniences of your office, and you know there is no employment but has its mortifications.—Sinecures are no where to be found but in the Church.

If for my sake you derogate from the prerogatives of your office, and deign to cast a glance upon the *Theory of Civil laws*, you will perhaps find in it a great many things that are new, but there will be likewise not a few which you have certainly thought of before. I have read and understood you sufficiently to be assured that that you will not blame me for having combated the opinion of Mr. de Montesquieu. I have done justice to his great genius, while I attack his errors. He is a brilliant genius subject to frequent eclipses. I am far from saying of him all I might have done. I have materials enough remaining to form a volume. I shall find a proper place for them, in the sequel of my work, if ever I compleat the grand project I have formed, to attack in their source, the multiplicity of laws, tribunals, customs, &c.—to prove that simplicity and uniformity are, or ought to be, the springs of policy, and that complication of every kind, is the parent of monsters. You will perceive that in the course of developing such principles, it will be requisite frequently to refute Mr. de Montesquieu, and that task appears as easy as it is necessary.

I think with you, Sir, that literature, the arts, and every thing that relates to them, are inventions highly useful for the rich; excellent resources for men of leisure who enjoy superfluity. These are *corals* which amuse them in the state of perpetual infancy, in which they are kept by their opulence. Their vivacity evaporates upon those trifles with which they amuse themselves. The attention they pay to them, prevents their making use of their strength to more dangerous purposes. But I believe the case to be entirely different with that other, and infinitely more numerous portion of mankind, who are called the people. These intellectual *corals* become to them poisoned Amulets, which spoil and corrupt them without remedy. The actual state of society condemns them to have only hands;—all is lost the moment they are put in a condition of perceiving that they have a soul.

Could one of those divisions of mankind be singly illuminated; were it possible to intercept all the rays which proceed from the little to the great, and to cover with everlasting darkness only that of the two which is no longer useful than while it is totally blind, I would willingly applaud the labours of the Philosophers and their partizans.

But reflect, Sir, the Sun cannot rise upon the first, without a twilight extending to the second, however distant it may be; and this class when enlightened, necessarily inclines to appreciate, or to mix with the other. Hence it follows that light is fatal to both; and that an obscurity, in which they might live quietly, each within its
 respective

relative limits, is infinitely preferable to a state of illumination, by which they only learn reciprocally to despise or detest one another.

This, Sir, is my small profession of literary faith, which I shall ever maintain to martyrdom exclusively.

L E T T E R IX.

Answer to Counsellor LINGUET, on MONTESQUIEU and GROTIUS.

I believe with you, Sir, that the *Spirit of Laws* contains more than one inadvertency. Few people read attentively.—It has not been observed that almost all Montesquieu's quotations are false. He cites the pretended political testament of Cardinal Richelieu, and makes him say, Chap. VI. Book III. that if there be found among the people, an unfortunate man of virtue, he ought not to be employed.—That testament, which besides is not worth being cited, says just the contrary; and that not in the sixth, but in the fourth Chapter.

He makes Plutarch affirm, that women are incapable of real love. He does not consider that this sentiment is put into the mouth of one of Plutarch's Interlocutors, and that Greek, too fantastic in his opinions, is severely reprimanded by Daphneus, in favour of whom Plutarch decides. That dialogue is wholly consecrated to the

the honour of their sex : but Montesquieu read too superficially, and judged too hastily.

From the same negligence he says, *that the grand Signior is not obliged by law to keep his word.—That all low trades were infamous in Greece.—That he laments the blindness of Francis I. who rejected the proposal of Christopher Columbus for the discovery of the Indies.*—You will remark that Columbus had discovered America before Francis I. was born.

The vivacity of his genius makes him assert in the same place, Book IV. Chap. XIX. *that the council of Spain was guilty of false policy in prohibiting the use of gold in embroidery, lace and gilding. Such a law, says he, would be similar to one we may suppose past in Holland, prohibiting cinamon.* He does not reflect that the Spaniards had no manufactures; that they would have been obliged to buy their stuffs and gold lace from other nations; and that the Dutch could purchase cinamon only at their own markets, because it grows no where but in their dominions.

Almost all the examples that he adduces, are taken from unknown nations, in the remotest parts of Asia, upon the credit of ill-informed or lying travellers.

He affirms that there are no navigable rivers in Persia, except the Cirus; he forgets that they have the Euphrates, the Oxus, the Araxes, the Phrasis, the Cirus, and the Indus itself, whose stream has long flowed under the laws of the
Kings

Kings of Persia. Chardin in the third volume of his travels, assures us, that the river Zenderoude, which runs through Ispahan, is as large as the Seine at Paris, and that it often drowns the houses on the quays of the city.

Unluckily the whole system of the *Spirit of Laws* is built upon an antithesis which is false in fact. He maintains that *Monarchies are established upon the principle of honour, and Republics upon that of virtue*; and in order to support that pretended *bon mot*, he says, (Book III. Ch. VII.) *the nature of honour is to require preferences, and distinctions; therefore honour, from the nature of the thing, is properly placed in Monarchical Governments.*—He ought to reflect that from *the nature of the thing*, the Romans, in the time of the republic, intrigued for the Prætorship, the Consulship, the Triumph, Crowns and Statues.

I have taken the liberty to point out several mistakes in that book, which, in other respects, is an admirable performance. I shall not be surprized if that celebrated work appear to you to contain more epigrammatic point than sound reasoning; and yet it abounds with so much wit and genius, that it will always be preferred to Grotius and Puffendorf:—their misfortune is to be tiresome; they are rather heavy than grave.

Grotius, whom you attack with so much justice, extorted from his age a reputation which he was far from deserving. His *Treatise on the Christian Religion* is not esteemed by men of real learning.

learning. He there says, Book I. Ch. XXII. *That the general conflagration is foretold in Hystaspes and the Sybilline Oracles.* To their testimony he adds those of Ovid and Lucan.—He quotes Lycophron to prove the history of Jonas.

If you would form a judgment of the character of Grotius's genius, read his harangue to *Anne of Austria* on the subject of her pregnancy. He compares her to the *Jewess Anne*, who had children in her old age. He says that the dolphins, when they frisk upon the water, announce an approaching calm, and for the same reason the little Dauphin that leaped in her womb, prognosticated a cessation of the troubles of the kingdom.*

I could quote you a hundred examples of this pedantic eloquence in that Grotius, who has been the object of so great admiration. Time is requisite in order to appretiate books, and fix the scale of reputations.

Be not afraid that people of the lower rank will read Puffendorf and Grotius; they are not fond of dull amusements. They would rather choose, if they were capable, to read some chapters of the Spirit of Laws, which are level to every capacity, because they are written with great ease and beauty. But let us make a distinction in what you call the *people*, between the professions which require a decent education, and those which require only the labour of the hands and daily fatigue. This last class is the most

* This is a Latin Pun, the word DAUPHIN, expressing the name of the fish, or the title of the Prince.

most numerous, and the sole relaxation and pleasure of its members, are to go to high mass and the tavern, because there they hear singing and sing themselves.—But for artisans of a higher order, whose professions require a considerable degree of reflexion, to perfect their taste and extend their knowledge; they begin to apply themselves to reading all over Europe.—In Paris you scarce know the Swiss, but from those of that nation who serve as porters at Noblemens gates, or the characters which Moliere has introduced speaking an unintelligible jargon in some farces: but the Parisians would be amazed, were they to see the manufacturers in almost every town in Swisserland, especially in Geneva, devoting to study the time which cannot be consecrated to labour. No, Sir, all is not lost, *the moment the people are put into a condition of perceiving that they have a soul.* On the contrary all is lost when they are treated like a herd of Bulls; for, sooner or later, they butt you with their horns. Do you believe the people read and reasoned in the time of the wars between the red and white rose in England; in that which brought Charles I. to the Scaffold; in the horrors of the *Armagnacs* and *Bourguignons*, or even in those of the *League*? The people, ignorant and ferocious, were spirited on by a few fanatic Doctors, who cried out, kill all in the name of the Lord. I would defy Cromwell now to turn England upside down by his jargon of an *Energumen*; John of Leyden to make himself King of Munster; and Cardinal de Retz to form the barricades at Paris. To conclude, Sir, you ought not to prohibit men from reading:—you would lose too much by it.

L E T T E R X.

Answer to the Letter of M. L. C.

Dated 23d Dec. 1768.

S I R,

IF you intend to apply seriously to the study of nature, permit me to tell you that you ought to set out with a resolution of forming no system. You must imitate the Boyles, the Galileos, and the Newtons; examine, weigh, calculate, and measure, but never guess. Newton never formed a system; he saw and made others see, but he has not substituted his own imaginations in the place of truth. What is demonstrated to us by our eyes and the mathematics, must be held for true; in all the rest, the only thing to be said is, *I know not.*

It is incontestible, that the tides exactly follow the course of the Sun and Moon—it is mathematically demonstrated, that those two bodies gravitate upon our globe, and in what proportion gravitate. From thence Newton hath not only calculated the action of the Sun and Moon upon the tides of the Ocean, but likewise the action of the Earth and Sun upon the waters of the Moon, supposing such waters to exist. Indeed it is strange that a man should have been capable of making such discoveries; but that man made use of the torch of mathematics, the only torch which gives unerring light.

Guard

Guard then, Sir, against suffering yourself to be seduced by imagination: Poetry is her sole sphere, she must be banished from natural philosophy.—To imagine a central fire in order to explain the flowing of the sea, is like solving a problem by a madrigal.

That all bodies contain fire, is a truth of which we are not permitted to doubt; it exists even in ice, as is demonstrated by experience. But that there is a furnace exactly in the centre of the earth, is a thing which no person can know; which is by no means probable, and which consequently cannot be admitted in natural philosophy.

Even if this fire did exist, it could not account either for the high tides at the Equinoxes, Solstices, or for those at full Moon; nor furnish a reason why those seas that do not communicate with the Ocean, have no tides, nor why the tides are retarded according to the course of the Moon, &c. There is not the least reason for admitting this pretended fire to be the cause of the swelling of the waters.

You ask, Sir, what becomes of the waters discharged into the sea by the rivers. Do you not know that a calculation has been made of the quantity of water raised by the action of the Sun, at a given degree of heat, and in a given time, in order to be afterwards resolved into rain by the help of the winds?

You say, that you think that very badly *imagined* which has been advanced by several authors;—

authors;—that the snows and the rains are sufficient for the formation of rivers.—Be assured, that it has neither been well nor ill *imagined*; it is a truth established by calculation. You may consult upon that subject Mariotte and the English Philosophical Transactions.

In one word, Sir, if I may be permitted to answer the honour of your letter by a piece of advice, read the good authors who have taken experiment and calculation for their sole guides, and look upon all other things as *Romances* unworthy of the attention of a man who desires instruction.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XI.

To the Same, upon occult Qualities.

YES, Sir, I have said it, I repeat it, and will repeat it, notwithstanding my certainty of being tiresome, that the doctrine of occult qualities is the wisest and truest which antiquity has produced. The formation of the elements, the emission of light, animals, vegetables, minerals, our birth, our death, waking, sleeping, sensation, thought,—every thing is occult quality. Descartes thought himself much superior to Aristotle, when he repeated in French what that sage had said in Greek. *We ought to begin with doubting every thing.* After doubting, he ought not to have framed a world of Cubes, and to have made

made of those Cubes, a globulous, a ramous, and a subtile matter; to have composed stars of such ingredients, and contrived a mechanism in nature, contrary to every law of motion. This extravagant romance succeeded for some time, because romances were then in fashion. Cyrus and Clelia were much preferable works, because they led no one into mistakes.—Teach me the history of the world if you know it, but beware of inventing it.

See, feel, measure, weigh, collect, separate, and be assured that you will never do any more.

Newton calculated the force of gravitation, but he has not discovered its cause. Why is that cause occult? It is a first principle.

We are acquainted with the laws of motion; but the cause of motion being a first principle, will for ever remain a secret. You are alive, but how? You will never know any thing of the matter.—You have sensations, ideas, but can you guess by what they are produced? Is not that the most occult thing in the world? Names have been given to a certain number of faculties, which display themselves in us according as our organs acquire some degree of strength, when they are freed from the teguments in which we were inclosed during nine months, (without so much as knowing in what that strength consists.) If we call any thing to mind, we say it is memory; if we range a few ideas in order, it is judgment; if we form a connected picture of some other scattered ideas, it is called imagination:—and the result or principle of those qualities is named

med *Soul*, a thing still a thousand times more occult.

Now, if you please, it being a certain truth that there does not exist in you one separate being called *Sensibility*, another *Memory*, a third *Judgment*, a fourth *Imagination*, can you easily conceive that you have a fifth composed of the four others which are really non-entities?

What was understood by the antients, when they pronounced the Greek word *Psyché* or *Nous*? Did they mean a property of man, or a particular Being concealed in man? Was it not an *occult* expression of a very occult thing?

Are not all the systems of *Ontology* and *Psychology* mere dreams? In our mother's womb we are entirely unacquainted with ourselves, yet there our ideas ought to be the purest, because there our attention is the least distracted.—We are unacquainted with ourselves at our birth, in our growth, during our life, and at the hour of our death.

The first reasoner who departed from the ancient doctrine of occult qualities, corrupted the understanding of mankind.—He involved us into a labyrinth, from which it is now impossible to extricate ourselves.

How much wiser had the first man been, who, sensible of his ignorance, had said to that being who is the author of the universe, “Thou hast
“made me without my knowing it, and thou
“preservest me without being able to find out
“the

“ the mode of my existence. When I suckled
 “ my nurse’s breast, I fulfilled one of the most
 “ abstruse laws of natural philosophy; and I
 “ fulfill one still more unknown when I eat and
 “ digest the aliments with which thou feedest
 “ me. I know still less how some ideas enter
 “ my head to quit it the next moment without
 “ ever re-appearing; and how others remain
 “ there during my whole life, notwithstanding
 “ my strong efforts to drive them out. I am
 “ an effect of thy occult and supreme power,
 “ which the stars obey as well as myself. A
 “ particle of dust agitated by the wind, saith not
 “ I command the winds. *In te vivimus move-*
 “ *mur et sumus.** Thou art the sole being, and
 “ the rest is only *mode*.”

This is that philosophy of occult qualities, of
 which Malebranche had a glimpse in the last cen-
 tury. Could he have stopped on the edge of the
 abyss, he had been the greatest or rather the sole
 Metaphysician; but he wanted to speak to the
 word; he leaped into the gulph and disappeared.

In his two first books he had knocked at the
 gates of truth; the author of the action of God
 upon the creatures turned all around, but as a
 blind man turns a mill.—A little before that time,
 there lived a Philosopher who was their master,
 but they knew it not; Heaven *forbid* that I should
 name him.

Since then we have had only men of wit; we
 must however except Mr. Locke, he was more
 than a man of wit, &c.

L E T-

* In thee we live, move, and have our being.

L E T T E R XII.

To Mr. P. Counsellor of the parliament of Dijon,
on some laws or customs.

Ferney, 28 Dec. 1771.

I THANK you, Sir, for making us unacquainted with our barbarous customs. I have read what regards the slavery of Mortmain, with the more attention and interest, as I have been labouring for a twelve-month past, in favour of those who are called *Franks*, (freemen) and are slaves;—slaves even to Monks. St. Pacome and St. Hilarian did not imagine that their successors would one day be masters of more slaves by Mortmain, than were possessed by Attila or Genferic. Our Monks say that they have succeeded to the rights of the conquerors, and that their vassals are the successors of the conquered. The cause is actually before the council.—We shall certainly lose it: such strength is in old customs, and such virtue in the saints.

We laugh at original sin, and we are wrong. Every body has his original sin. That of these poor *Serfs* (bondmen or villains) who amount to more than a hundred thousand through the kingdom, is, that their fathers, the Gaulish peasantry, did not cut the throats of that handful of barbarous Visigoths, Burgundians, or Franks, who came to rob and murder them. Had they defended themselves with the same vigour the Romans exerted against the Cimbri, we should not have suits for Mortmain.

They

They who enjoy this noble right, assure us that it is divine. I perfectly agree with them, for certainly it is not human. I acknowledge to you, Sir, that I renounce it with my whole heart; I want neither right of Mortmain nor Escheat in the little nook of land which I inherit, and I find my account in it.—I am greatly pleased with the edict of Henry II. which has been adopted by the Parliament of Paris.—Why is not their example followed by all the Parliaments in the kingdom? Almost all our ancient jurisprudence is ridiculous, barbarous, and contradictory. What is true on this side of my book is false on the other. Our whole set of customs are good for nothing but to be thrown into the fire. In England there is but one law and one measure.

You quote the *Spirit of Laws*; alas! it never has remedied, nor ever will remedy, any thing. Not that its author quotes too often falsely; not that he almost always thinks of shewing wit: but because a King only is capable of composing a good book on our laws, by changing them entirely.

Accept my thanks, Sir, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R XIII.

To the BARON DE FAUGIERES, Officer of Marine,
on the subject of a monument which he proposed
to erect to the great men of the age of Louis XIV.

YOU propose, Sir, that monuments of all the great men, who adorned the age of Louis XIV. should be raised round the statue erected to that Prince in Montpellier, after his death. This project is so much the finer, as for some years there seems to have been a kind of confederacy to depreciate every thing that makes the glory of those memorable times. We are weary of the master-pieces of the last age.—We use every effort to make Louis XIV. little, and we reproach him above all things with having desired to be great. The nation in general gives the preference to Henry IV. and excludes all the other kings. I do not examine whether this be justice or fickleness;—if our reason brought to perfection can now discern true merit better than formerly, I only remark, that in the time of Henry IV. it was entirely incapable of discerning or feeling merit.—My people do not know me, said that good Prince to the Duke of Sully; they will regret me. In fact, Sir, let us speak without disguise; he was hated and despised. Fancism, which persecuted him from his cradle, conspired a hundred times against his life, and at last deprived him of it in the midst of his great officers, by the hand of a quondam Mendicant Monk, who had lost his senses, and was transported with the madness of the *League*.—
We

We now make that Prince the *Amende Honorable*;* we give him the preference to all our Kings, though we still preserved, and that for a long time, a great part of those prejudices which concurred to the assassination of the best of Kings.

But if Henry IV. was great, his age was not so in any respect. I shall not here mention the multitude of criminal and infamous actions with which superstition and discord polluted France. I confine myself to those arts whose glory you desire to eternize. They were either entirely unknown or very unskillfully exercised. To begin with that of war; we had been in arms forty years, and there was not a single man who left behind him the reputation of an able General, not one whom posterity has set on a level with a Prince of Parma, or a Prince of Orange.—As to the Marine, Sir, you who have distinguished yourself in it, are sensible that it did not then exist.—The arts of peace which form the charm of society, embellish cities, enlighten the understanding, and soften the manners, were entirely strangers among us; all these originated only in that age which saw the birth and death of Louis XIV.

I can scarcely conceive the inveteracy with which we now persecute the memory of the great Colbert, who contributed so much to the improvement of all those arts, and especially of the Marine,

* In France criminals are obliged, before execution, to beg pardon of God, their King, and their country, which is called making the *Amende Honorable*.

Marine, which is one of the principal objects of your grand design. You know, Sir, that he created that Marine which was so long formidable. Two years before his death, France had a fleet of an hundred and four-score ships of war, and thirty galleys. Manufactures, commerce, trading companies in the East and West Indies,—all were his work.—His superior may rise, and that is certainly high praise; but no man will ever be able to eclipse him.

The case will be the same in the arts that depend upon the mental faculties, as eloquence, poesy, philosophy; and in those where the genius guides the hand, as architecture, painting, sculpture, and mechanics.—The men who embellished the age of Louis XIV. by all those talents, will never sink to oblivion, whatever may be the merit of their successors. The first who run in one career, always remain at the head of the others in posterity.

Only the inventors have a claim to glory, said Newton in his quarrel with Leibnitz, and he was right. We must regard as inventors a Pascal who actually formed a new species of eloquence;—A Pellison who defended Fouquet in the same style that Cicero had defended King Dejotarus before Cæsar; a Corneille, who was among us a creator of tragedy, even when he copied the Spanish play of the Cid; a Moliere, who really invented Comedy, and brought it to perfection. And had not Descartes in his inventions forsaken his guide, Geometry;—had Malebranche known when to stop in his flight, what men would they not have been!

It

It is univerſally agreed that the great paſt age was the age of genius. But after the men who are regarded as inventors, often come, I do not ſay, diſciples formed in the ſchool of their maſters, which would be commendable, but apes who ſtrive to ſpoil the work of thoſe inimitable maſters.—Thus, after Newton diſcovered the nature of light, comes a Caſtel, who wants to refine upon him, and propoſes an ocular harpſichord.

Scarce was a new world diſcovered by the help of the microſcope, when up ſtarts a Needham, who fancies he has formed a republic of eels, which immediately bring forth other eels, all in a drop of broth, or water boiled with ſhot wheat. Animals and vegetables are produced without ſeed, and to compleat the ridicule, this is called the ſublime of Natural Hiſtory.

As ſoon as true philoſophers had calculated the action of the Sun and of the Moon, on the flux and reflux of the ſeas, Romancers, below Cirano de Bergerac, wrote the hiſtory of the times, when thoſe ſeas covered the Alps and Mount Caucasus, and when the univerſe was inhabited only by fiſh. They afterwards diſcover to us, the great Epocha, the time when Porpoiſes our anceſtors became men, and in what manner their forked tail was changed into thighs and legs. This is the great ſervice lately done to mankind by Teliamed.

Thus, Sir, in every art, in every profeſſion, the good maſters are ſucceeded by quacks.--And,
heaven

heaven grant that we may never have others of a more pernicious kind.

May your project be executed; may all the geniuses who have adorned the age of Louis XIV. re-appear in the square of Montpellier, and inspire future ages with never-ending emulation.

L E T T E R XIV.

To an Ecclesiastic, author of an Epic Poem on the conquest of the promised land, in twelve cantos, printed at Paris by Delalain, bookseller, Rue St. Jaques, 1766, with the privilege of the King.

S I R,

THE person whom you commissioned to convey to me your poem of the *Promised Land*, not only has not sent me your beautiful work, but has not even mentioned it to me; he did not think me capable of reading so curious a performance. I am sensible of the full value of what I have lost. Doubtless nothing can be more poetical than the Conquests of Joshua, and all that preceded and followed them.—No Grecian fiction comes near them; every event is a prodigy; and the miracles produce there, an effect the more admirable, as it cannot be said that the author introduces the Deity in the manner of the Greek poets, who brought down a divinity upon the scene, when they did not know how to unravel their plot. In the subject of your work we every where behold

behold the finger of God, without the divine interposition being a necessary resource. Joshua might have forded the Jordan, which is not five-and-forty feet broad, and is fordable in an hundred places, but God made the river flow back to its source, in order to manifest his glory.

It was not necessary that Jericho should fall by the sound of rams horns, since Joshua had intelligence in the city by Means of Rahab, the harlot, but God made the walls fall by seven processions, to shew that he is the master of all walls.—The Amorites were already crushed by a shower of stones which fell from Heaven; it was not necessary that God should stop the Sun and Moon at noon day, in order that Joshua might triumph over that handful of men who had just been stoned from on high. If God stops the Sun and the Moon, it is to shew that the Sun and the Moon depend upon him.

What appears to me still more favourable to poetry; the subject is little and the means are great. Joshua in truth conquered only three or four leagues of country, which was soon after lost; but all nature was thrown into convulsions for the little tribe of Ephraim. 'Tis thus that Æneas, in Virgil, by the help of the Gods, establishes himself in a village in Italy. The great advantage you have over Virgil is, you sing the truth, and Virgil sung fiction. Both your heroes were pious, which is another advantage.—It is true, that Joshua may be reproached with some cruelties; but they are sacred, which is still a farther advantage. In that little spot of four leagues

leagues there are only thirty Kings condemned to be hanged for having dared to resist a stranger sent by the Lord. And you will prove, when you please, that too many heretical Princes cannot be hanged for the advantage of the good cause.

Judge, Sir, how I regret the not having had it in my power, in my unpromised land, to read your epic poem on the promised land, which makes me conceive so great hopes.

I have the honour to be, with all the sentiments that are your due, &c.

L E T T E R XV.

TO HORACE WALPOLE.

S I R,

Ferney, 15th July, 1768.

I HAVE not dared to speak a word of English these forty years, and you speak our language extremely well. I have seen letters from you, written as you think. Besides my age and my infirmities do not permit me to write with my own hand: you will therefore receive my thanks in my own tongue.

I have just read your preface to your history of Richard III. It appears to me to be too short:—when a man is plainly in the right, and joins to his knowledge a philosophy so firm, a style so masculine, I could wish that he spoke
to

to me longer. Your father was a great Minister and a good Orator, but I question whether he could have written like you.—You cannot say, *quia pater major me est.**

I have constantly been of your opinion, Sir, that we ought to distrust all ancient histories. Fontenelle, the only man of the age of Louis XIV. who united poetry, philosophy, and learning, declared that they were fables agreed upon. And it must be confessed that Rollin has compiled too many chimeras and contradictions.

After having read the preface to your history, I read that to your romance.† You there divert yourself a little at my expence;—the French understand raillery, but I am going to answer you seriously.

You have almost made your nation believe that I despise Shakespear.—I was the first that introduced Shakespear to the French; forty years ago I translated some passages from him, as well as from Milton, Waller, Rochester, Dryden and Pope. I can assure you that I was the first man in France that had the least knowledge of English poetry.—Scarce had we heard the name of Locke mentioned. For thirty years have I been persecuted by a cloud of fanatics, because I said that Locke is the Hercules of Metaphysics, who has fixed the boundaries of the human mind.

My destiny likewise decreed that I should be the first who explained to my countrymen, the
I discoveries

* Because my father is greater than I.

† The castle of Otranto.

discoveries of the great Newton, which some people among us still call systems. I have been your apostle and your martyr. In truth the English ought not to complain of me.

I long ago said, that had Shakespeare appeared in the age of Addison, he would have joined to his genius, that elegance and purity for which Addison is commendable. I have said *that his genius was his own, and his faults those of his age*. In my opinion, he is exactly such as the Lopez de Vega, and the Calderona of the Spaniards.—A beautiful nature, but very wild, no regularity, no decency, no art; a mixture of meanness and grandeur, of buffoonery with the terrible, the chaos of tragedy, in which there are a hundred flashes of light. The Italians, who restored tragedy a century before the English and Spaniards, did not give into this fault. They were better imitators of the Greeks.—There is no buffoonery in the Oedipus and Electra of Sophocles. I strongly imagine that this gross practice took its rise from our court fools. All of us on this side the Alps were a little rude and unpolished. Each Prince had his fool, who was an Officer of the palace. Ignorant Kings, educated by ignorant preceptors, could not be acquainted with the noble pleasures of the understanding: they so far degraded human nature, as to pay a man for entertaining them with nonsense. Hence came our *mere sotte* (foolish mother) and before Moliere, a court fool was a standing character in all comedies.—This custom is abominable.

It is true, Sir, that I have said as you represent me that there are serious comedies, such as the
Misanthrope,

Misanthrope, which are masterly performances, that there are some extremely risible, as George Dandin; that the risible, the serious, and the pathetic, may well be united in the same comedy. I have said that all kinds are good except the dull kind.—Yes, Sir, but gross vulgarity is no kind.—*In my father's house are many mansions*; but I never pretended that it was decent to lodge in the same chamber Charles V. and Don Japhet of Armenia; Augustus and a drunken sailor; M. Aurelius and a Jack Pudding.—This seems to me to have been the opinion of Horace, in the most refined of all ages: consult this art of poetry. All the enlightened nations of Europe are of the same opinion at present; even the Spaniards begin at the same time to get rid of their bad taste and the Inquisition: for a just understanding equally proscribes the one and the other.

You are so sensible, Sir, how much a tragedy is disfigured by what is trivial and low, that you reproach Racine with making Antiochus, in Berenice, say,

De son appartement cette porte est prochaine,
Et cette autre conduit dans celui de la Reine.

The door of his apartment is next to that which leads to the Queen's. These verses assuredly are not very heroical, but consider that they are in a narrative scene which ought to be simple.—This is not a beauty of poetry, but a beauty of exactness, which fixes the place of the scene, which at once gives the spectator all the necessary information, and advertises him, that all the personages are to appear in that closet, which communicates with the other apartments, with-

out which it would be improbable that Titus, Berenice, and Antiochus, should, through the whole play, speak in the same chamber.

Que le lieu de la scène y soit fixe & marqué.

Let the place of the scene be fixed and marked out, says that oracle of good taste, the judicious Despreaux in his art of Poetry, which is at least equal to that of Horace.—Our excellent Racine almost never failed in this rule, and it is a circumstance worth our admiration, that without transgressing the rules of probability, Athalia should appear in the temple of the Jews, in the same place where the High priest has been seen.

You will still more easily excuse Racine, when you remember that the play of Berenice was in some measure the history of Louis XIV. and your English Princess, sister of Charles II. They both lodged on the same floor at St. Germain, and their apartments were separated by a saloon.

I shall remark, by the bye, that Racine represented on the stage the amours of Louis XIV. with his sister-in-law, and that monarch was highly pleased with him for it. A stupid tyrant perhaps would have punished him. I shall likewise remark, that this Berenice, so tender, so delicate, so disinterested, to whom Racine pretends that Titus was indebted for all his virtues, and who was upon the point of being Empress, was only an insolent and debauched Jewess, that
publicly

publicly lay with her own brother Agrippa the Second. Juvenal calls her an *Incestuous Barbarian*. I observe in the third place, that she was forty-four years old, when Titus dismissed her. My fourth remark is, that this Jewish mistress of Titus is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. She was then young, when, according to the author of that book, she came to visit Festus, Governor of Judæa, and when Paul being accused of having polluted the Temple, defended himself, by saying that he was still a good Pharisee: But let us leave the Pharisaicalness of Paul, and the gallantry of Berenice. Let us return to the rules of the stage, which are more interesting to men of letters.

You free Britons, neither observe *unity of place, unity of time, nor unity of action*. In truth, your pieces are not the better for the neglect; probability ought to be reckoned for something.—The art becomes more difficult by preserving it, and difficulties conquered, give pleasure and reputation in every art. Permit me, Sir, tho' you be an Englishman, in some respects to defend my own nation.—I so often tell them the blunt truth, that it is very just I should commend them, when I think they are in the right. Yes, Sir, I have believed, I believe, and I shall continue to believe, that in regard to Tragedies and Comedies, Paris infinitely surpasses Athens. Moliere, and even Regnard, seem to me as much superior to Aristophanes, as Demosthenes excells our Pleaders. I will tell you boldly that all the Greek Tragedies appear to me, the works of school boys in comparison of the sublime scenes

scenes of Corneille, and the faultless pieces of Racine. Thus thought Boileau himself, notwithstanding the warmth of his admiration for the antients. He made no difficulty of writing under Racine's portrait, that that great man had surpassed Euripides, and equalled Corneille.

Yes, I believe there are many more men of taste in Paris, than there were in Athens. At Paris we have more than thirty thousand people, who delight in the fine arts, and Athens had not ten thousand. In Athens the common people entered the Theatre, and with us they do not, except upon solemn or ridiculous occasions when they are presented with a spectacle gratis. Our continual intercourse with the fair sex, has given our sentiments much more delicacy, our morals much more decency, and our taste much more refinement. Leave us our theatre; the Italians their *Favole boscarecce*; you are rich enough without these.

It is true some very bad pieces, whose plots are ridiculous, and dialogue barbarous, have for a time, prodigious success at Paris, when supported by cabal, the spirit of party, the fashion, or the temporary protection of some persons of credit. It is the intoxication of a moment, but in a few years the illusion is dissipated. Don Japhet, of Armenia, and Turcaret are abandoned to the populace, and the siege of Calais is no more esteemed except at Calais.

I must not say one word more on the rhyme with which you reproach us.—Almost all Dryden's

den's pieces are in rhyme. It is one difficulty more;—those verses of his, which are in the memory and the mouths of every body, are in rhyme: and I still maintain, that after *Cinna*, *Athalie*, *Phædra*, *Iphigenia*, have been written in rhyme, whoever would shake off that yoke in France, would be looked upon as a feeble artist who had not strength to bear it.

In quality of an old man, I will tell you an anecdote. One day I asked Pope why Milton had not put his poem into rhyme, at the time when it was the universal practice, in imitation of the Italians? his reply was, *because he could not.* *

I have now, Sir, said all that I had on my heart. I acknowledge that I committed a great blunder in not recollecting that the Earl of Leicester went originally by the name of Dudley; but if you was to take a fancy of entering into the house of Peers, I should always remember the name of Walpole with the most respectful esteem.

Before sending this letter, I have had time, Sir, to read your *Richard III.* You would make an excellent Attorney General. You weigh all the probabilities, but you seem to have a secret predilection for that *Crook-back*. You maintain him to have been handsome, and even a man of spirit and honour. The Benedictine
Calmet

* Whether should we question the veracity of Voltaire, or the candour of Pope?

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Calmet has written a dissertation, to prove that Jesus Christ had a fine face. I am willing to believe with you, that Richard III. was neither so ugly nor so wicked as he is represented: but I should not have been fond of having any thing to do with him. Your white rose and your red rose had dreadful thorns for the nation.

Those gracious Kings are all a pack of rogues.

In truth, when we peruse the histories of the houses of York and Lancaster, we would be tempted to believe we were reading the history of highwaymen.—As for your Henry VII. he was only a cut-purse, &c.

I am, with respect, &c.

L E T T E R XVI.

To A M D'E T

MY LORD,

July, 1776.

YOU know that Louis XIV. at leaving the grand council, which was assembled to consider the testament of the King of Spain, met three of his daughters, who were at play, and said to them, well, how would you act if you were in my place? The Princesses gave such opinions as occurred to them; upon which the King replied,—in whatever manner I act, I shall be sure of being censured.

You condescended to act the same part with an ignorant old man, that Louis XIV. did with his children. This piece of humour amuses you. The parson wishes sometimes that the clown should remonstrate.

I immediately remonstrate then, by saying that all men have been, are at present, and will continue to be guided by circumstances. I exceedingly respect Cardinal Richelieu, but he did not engage with Gustavus Adolphus, until Gustavus had landed in Pomerania without consulting him; yet he took the advantage of the event. Cardinal Mazarin, profiting by the death of the Duke of Weimar, obtained Alsace for France, and the Dutchy of Rhetel for himself. Let people say what they will, Louis XIV. did not expect, when he concluded the peace of Ryswick, that in three years his grandson would succeed to the throne of Charles V. He still less expected, that the first war in which his grandson should engage would be against his uncle. Nothing of what you have seen happen, has been foreseen. You know that chance brought about the peace with England, which that fine fellow Lord Bolingbroke signed, when in the arms of Mademoiselle P.....* You, my Lord, like all other great men, profit by the situation in which you find things at the time.

The great matter, say they, is to have money. Henry IV. prepared to make himself the

I 5

Arbitrator

* Was it not Prior who was the English Plenipotentiary, and not Bolingbroke?

Arbitrator of Europe, by having gold scales made with the assistance of the Duke of Sully. The English succeed only by means of their guineas, and the ten-fold credit which they procure. The King of Prussia made all Germany tremble for some time, because his father had more bags of money than bottles in his cellar at Berlin. Fabricius's days are long over: it is the richest that carries the day, as it is he among us, who is most rich, that purchases the employment of a Master of the Court of Requests, and who afterwards may come to govern the nation. This is not very noble, but nevertheless it is the truth.

I see that upon all the thrones in the world, they live from hand to mouth, like Fontaine's Cocker. What! is there no system? No, the systems of Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, Descartes and Leibnitz, have all tumbled to the ground. Perhaps in your noble profession, as in natural philosophy, it is best to be satisfied with making experiments.

L E T T E R XVII.

To Mr. TIRIOT.

Ferney, 16th Sept. 1768.

UPON my faith, my friend, all the world are quacks; schools, academies, the gravest societies, are like Arnaud, the apothecary, whose little purses cure all kinds of apoplexies as soon as they are tied about the neck; and Mr. le Lievre, who

who still sells his *Baume de Vie*, notwithstanding the numbers of people who die daily.

Some years ago the Jesuits had a lawsuit with the druggists at Paris, about some sort of an Elixir which they sold at a very high price, after having sold abundant grace which was not sufficient; while the Jansenists sold effectual grace, which had no efficacy. This world is a great fair, where every merry Andrew endeavours to collect the croud about himself: every man preys upon his neighbour. There is a certain sage in our little country here, who has discovered that the souls of fleas and gnats are immortal, and that all animals are created only to live again. But there are some people who have not such elevated expectations. I even knew those who can scarce be made to believe that the water Polypus is an animal. They see nothing in the small grass which floats in stinking puddles, but grass that grows again after having been cut, like any other grass. They do not see that these weeds devour little insects; but they see the little insects enter into the substance of the weeds and devour them.

These same unbelievers will not be persuaded that coral is composed of heaps of little sea vermin. The late Mr. de la Faye said, that he had no sort of desire to be perfectly acquainted with the history of all those sort of folks, and that it was not worth while to give one's self any trouble about people with whom we never can live.

But

But we have some other geniuses still more sublime than those:—they will create a world for you with as little difficulty as the Abbé de la Teignant writes a sonnet, and employ for that purpose instruments which never have been seen. Others come afterwards, and people this world by *attraction*. A certain Dreamer in my neighbourhood has published his opinion, in which he seriously advances, that this world will last as long as new systems can be formed, but when system building is at an end, the world will come to an end. If that be the case, the world will probably last a considerable time.

You had great reason for astonishment, when you found in *The man of Forty Crowns*, that the system of eggs was ascribed to the great Calculator Harvey. It is true that he believed it, and was so perfectly persuaded of it, that he took these words for his motto, *Every thing is produced from an egg*. In the mean time, while he assures us, that every thing in nature originated in eggs, he saw nothing in the formation of animals, but the employment of a weaver in warping his web.

Next to him, others succeeded, who saw infinite numbers of small worms capering about in the generative fluid. Some time after, they were no longer to be seen, and went entirely out of fashion. All the systems which have been erected about the manner of our coming into the world have been destroyed one after another. The way of making love is the only one that has remained without alteration.

Your

Your question is very apropos, when enquiring about all these romances, you ask me, if in Lapon's collection, which is just printed at Lyons, they have printed those surprising letters, wherein it was proposed to perforate a hole to the center of the earth;—to build a Latin town there;—to dissect the brains of Patagonians, on purpose to be informed of the nature of the soul;—and to cloath the human body with pitch to preserve health:—you will find that these fine affairs are exceedingly softened, and very much disguised in this new edition. So that in the end, it will be found that all these corrections should be placed to my account. *Ridiculum acri fortius ac melius magnas plerumque secat res.*

What is printed in my name gives me more pain; but what would you have me do? I cannot help it. Can Arnaud, the apothecary, prevent his nostrums from being counterfeited? Adieu, *Qui bene latuit bene vixit.*

L E T T E R XVIII.

To the EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

Ferney, 24th September, 1771.

* * * * *

OF the five senses which fall to our lot, my Lord Huntington tells me that you have lost only one, and that you have a good stomach, which is well worth a pair of ears.

Perhaps.

Perhaps I am the properest person for deciding whether deafness, blindness, or want of digestion is the greatest calamity. From a knowledge of the case, I can judge of all the three, but it is a long time since I have presumed to decide upon trifles, and therefore have the stronger reasons for not attempting to decide on matters which are so important. I am content with believing, that if you have plenty of sunshine in the handsome house which you have built, there will be tolerable monuments. That is all which can be hoped for at our time of life, or indeed at any time of life. Cicero wrote a very fine treatise upon old age, but he did not prove by facts what he had advanced in his writings, for the last years of his life were very unfortunate.

You have lived much longer and happier than he did. You had nothing to do with either perpetual dictators or triumvirs. Your lot has been, and is still, one of the most enviable in the great lottery of life, where the good prizes are so few, and where the great prize of continual happiness has never yet been gained by any one.

Your philosophy has never been distracted by chimeras, which have now and then perplexed some brains that were otherwise tolerably good. You have never been in any sense a Quack yourself, nor a dupe to Quacks, which I esteem as no common degree of merit, and contributes much to the shadow of happiness that we can taste of in this short life, &c. &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XIX.

Ferney, 4th of May, 1772.

EVERY one, Sir, must make his *testament*, but you very much doubt, whether that which has been imputed to me, is really my work, or not. The Old and New Testament have occasioned enough of foolish things to be said, without my adding any thing of mine. My pretended last Will is the production of a Counsellor of Paris, whose name is Marchand, who sometimes makes people laugh at his drolleries. I hope that my real testament will be both better and wiser than that piece.

The plague of all is, that after we have been slaves all our lives, we must likewise be slaves after our deaths. No man can be buried as he would wish. Those people who would be glad to be deposited in urns upon the chimney pieces of their friends, are obliged to go and rot in a church-yard, or some such place. They who would chuse to die in the communion of Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and Cicero, are obliged to die in the communion of Martin Luther, if they die at Upsal; or go to the next world besmeared with the oil of a Greek Patriarch, if a fever should lay hold of them in the Morea.

I own to you, that of late years they die much more commodiously in this little spot of country where I live, than they used to do formerly. The freedom of thinking has been insensibly

sensibly established among them, as it is in England. There are people who accuse me of being the cause of this change. I wish I could deserve the same reproach for having occasioned the same thing all the way from Constantinople to Dalicaria. It is horrid and ridiculous to trouble both the dead and the living. I think that every one should have the privilege of disposing of both his soul and body after his own fancy:—and the great point ought to be, that no one should molest either the soul or body of his neighbour. Our comfort after death is, we shall not know how we are treated. We have been baptised without our knowing any thing of the matter, and we shall know as little when we come to be buried. Perhaps, what would have been best, would be never to have received that life, of which we constantly complain, yet continue always to love. But these things depend not upon us. We are fastened, as Horace says, with the strong nails of necessity.

L E T T E R XX.

To Prince G. Ambassador at the Hague.

Ferney, 19th June, 1773.

MY LORD THE PRINCE,

YOU do a singular service to reason and good sense, by having the works of the late Mr. H——reprinted. That book will find opponents, and even among the philosophers. No body will allow that all minds are equally capable

ble of acquiring science, and differ only as they happen to have a different education. Nothing is more false, and nothing is more clearly demonstrated to be false, by constant experience. Sensible minds will always be sorry for what he has said about friendship, and he himself would have disapproved of what he has said, or at least he would have greatly softened it, if a passion for systems had not led him beyond all bounds.

Perhaps it were much to be wished that there had been more of method, and fewer of those ill-founded little histories in his work. But I believe that whatever he has said on superstition, upon the abominations of intolerance, on liberty, on tyranny, and on human misery, will be well received by all who are not either fools or fanatics. Some philosophers might have corrected his first book, but to persecute him as was done, was both absurd and cruel, and worthy only of the fourteenth century. Whatever the fanatics have anathematized in this valuable man, may be found after all in the maxims of the Duke de Rochefoucault, and even in the first chapters of Locke. We may write against a philosopher in searching, like him, after truth, though we pursue different paths; but to persecute him is highly dishonourable, and merits the execrations of posterity. There wanted only some Milituses and Anituses to present your friend with a cup of hemlock.

I still owe thanks to your Excellency for the history of the war of the sublime Catherine
against

against the sublime Port, of the unsublime Mustapha. You know that I interest myself almost as much in that war, as in the universal toleration which condemns all wars. It is sometimes necessary to fight against our neighbours, but there is no necessity for burning our countrymen alive, because of their opinions. It is said that the Pope is of as tolerating a spirit as a Pope can be; I wish it may be so for the sake of the human race. I wish the same to the Mufti, to the Sherrif of Mecca, to the grand Lama, and to Dairi.

I am the possessor of a little spot of dirt as large as a worm hillock, upon this wretched globe; I have Papists, Calvinists, Pietists, some Socinians, and even a Jesuit, living with me, and to the present moment they all continue to live together in the most perfect harmony. It is the same all over your great empire under the auspices of Catherine. They have enjoyed this happiness a long time in England, Holland, Brandenburg, Prussia, and in a number of towns in Germany: Why then should they not enjoy it over the whole earth? Why is not the following maxim softened? *May he who is not of our opinion be like an undertenant, and as a Pagan.* Why should we throw the guest into a dungeon who hath not drest in his best suit to come and sup with us? Why in these days do they make a father of a family and his wife die of an apoplexy, who having given almost all they had to the Dominicans, kept a few florins for a dinner?—Wherefore?—Wherefore?—Wherefore?—If I am asked the reason of my being

being so attached to you, I will answer, it is because you are just, benevolent, and have a spirit of toleration.

What say you of the inhuman Energumen, who believed I was the enemy of your friend, and who wrote a Philippic against me?

Please to accept my humble acknowledgments, &c.

L E T T E R XXI.

To Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON, Ambassador at Naples.

Ferney, 17th June, 1773.

S I R,

THE public are indebted to you for their knowing Vesuvius and Mount Etna, much better than they were known in the times of the Cyclops, or afterwards in the time of Pliny. The mountains which you have seen from my windows at Ferney, are in a quite different taste. Your Vesuvius and your Etna are full of whims; they are like some little men, who having too great a flow of spirits, often put themselves in a passion without reason; but our mountains, the *Glacieres*, that are ten times higher, and forty times their extent, have always the same countenance, and are in eternal repose. Lakes that are six miles long, and always frozen, are fixed in the middle regions of the air, between white rocks that are above the clouds and the thunder,

der, without showing the least sensible change in a thousand ages.

It is no great distance from the furnace where you are, to the frozen mountains of Swisserland, yet what an immense difference between the countries, the men, the governments, Calvin and St. Januarius !

I was sorry to see that you could not find a thermometer in Sicily. What would Archimedes say if he was to return to Syracuse ? But what would the Trajans and the Antonines say if they were to return to Rome ?

Nothing can be plainer than that the eruptions of Volcanos should produce small mountains. Those which the ants raise in our gardens are much more surprising. These little mountains formed in eight days by insects, are two or three hundred times the height of the architects. But for our venerable mountains, that alone deserve to be called mountains, from whence flow the Rhine, the Danube, and the Po ; those enormous masses appear to have more consistence than *Monte Nuovo*, or the new pretended Island of Santorin. The immense chain of high mountains, which in every sense crown the earth, have always appeared to me as old as the world ; —they are the bones of that great animal ; —he would perish of thirst, if there were not rivers contained in them, and there could be no rivers without these mountains, which are perpetual reservoirs.

Posterity

Posterity will one day laugh at us, when they know that we have had quacks who would make us believe that the currents of the sea had formed the Alps, Mount Taurus, the Pyrennees and the Cordeliers.

All Paris would be greatly alarmed, if they were told that a comet was to come and destroy this earth on the 20th or 21st of May. In that expectation of the end of the world, notice would be sent to all the ladies at court, and all the market women, to go to mass, which, as you know, is an infallible secret for changing the course of comets. People who were not astronomers, formerly prophesied that the world would come to an end even in their own times. Is it from anger or compassion that this catastrophe is delay'd? *To be, or not to be, that is the question, &c.*

L E T T E R XXII.

To Mr. Du M*****, Member of several Academies, upon antient Anecdotes.

SINCE, my friend, you could not obtain the Professorship of Arabic, apply for the Professorship of *antient Balderdash*. There are a number of them established, at least in that taste, if not under that appellation. It will be very entertaining to shew us, if it be true, that all which we think we have invented, has been borrowed from the antients; as Reaumur has invented the art of hatching chickens without fowl, five or six thousand years after the practice had begun in Egypt.

Egypt. There are people who have seen the Copernican system among the antient Chaldeans: but what will be still more amusing, will be to shew that all our modern tales have been pillaged from the highest Oriental antiquity.

For example: the story of the Ephesian Matron was given in verses by Fontaine, in France; and before his time, in Italy: it is to be found in Petronius, who took it from the Greeks. But from whence had the Greeks taken it? From the Arabian tales. From whom did the Arabians get it? From the Chinese. You will see it in the Chinese tales, translated by Pere Dentrecoles, and collected by Pere Du Halde. What deserves our attention is, that the story is much more moral, according to the Chinese, than according to our translators.

I related in one of my useless tracts, the fable from whence Moliere took his *Amphytrion*, which was an imitation of Plautus, who had copied it from the Greek; but the original is Indian. It was translated by colonel Dow, who is a perfect master of the sacred language, which has been spoken twelve or fifteen thousand years upon the banks of the Ganges, near the town of Benares, about twenty leagues from Calcutta, which is the capital of the English company.

The learned Colonel Dow*, (*Annal. ii. page 273*) says, that there was an Hindou of uncommon strength, who had a beautiful wife, of whom
he

* The Translator has not been able to find this story in Colonel Dow's History, and therefore the proof of its existence must rest with M. de Voltaire.

he became jealous ; and having beat her, run off and left her. A roguish Deity, who was neither a Brama, Vishnou, or Sib, but a Deity of lower rank, yet at the same time very powerful, transformed himself into the figure of a man, exactly resembling the fugitive husband ; and under that figure approached the forsaken wife. The doctrine of the metempsychosis gave the trick an air of probability. The amorous Deity begged pardon of the supposed wife for his having treated her so ill ; and having obtained her forgiveness, he lay with her, got her with child, and continued master of the house. The repenting husband, who had always loved his wife, returned, and threw himself at her feet, but found another *self* settled in his house, by whom he was treated as an impostor and forcerer. It occasioned a law suit, like the affair of Martin Guerre, which happened not long ago. The case was pleaded before the Parliament of Benares. The first president was a Brachman, who suddenly conjectured that one of the two must be a dupe, and the other a Deity, and thought of the following method of discovering the true husband. As the husband was reputed to be a man of extraordinary strength, it was ordered that the contending parties should give a proof of their virility in presence of the parliament, and that the most potent should be decreed to be the true husband. Accordingly they performed, and the one having exceeded the other in the proportion of fifty to twelve, the parliament were about to decide in his favour, when the president observed, that the one was a hero, but had not surpassed human powers, while the other must be a Deity who sported

sported with their ignorance. The Deity confessed the whole affair, and returned to Heaven laughing.

You will allow that the Hindou Amphytrion is more comic and more ingenious than the Grecian Amphytrion, though it could not be so decently brought upon the stage.

You will perhaps surprize your people still more, when you relate the origin of the famous quarrel between Aaron, with Dathan, Korah, and Abiram, wrote by a Jew, who probably was the Loustick of his tribe. He is, perhaps, the only Jew who understodd raillery. His book is not of the same antiquity with the first Brachmans; but certainly is antient, and more antient than Homer. The Italian Jews had it printed at Venice, in the fifteenth century; and the famous Gaumin, Counsellor of State, enriched it with notes in Latin. Fabricius has inserted them in his Latin translation of the life and death of Moses, another antient work, which is pretended to have been written in the time of Esdras. I shall copy the passage as it is found in the second book, page 165, number 297 of the Hamburgh edition.

“ There was a poor widow who was the
 “ cause of this quarrel. This woman had no-
 “ thing but a single ewe for her whole stock.
 “ She shored her ewe, and Aaron came and said
 “ unto her, it is written, that the first fruits are
 “ the Lord’s; and he carried off the wool.
 “ The woman, in tears, went and complained
 “ to Korah, who remonstrated to the priest
 “ Aaron,

“ Aaron, but his remonstrances were of no effect.
 “ Korah gave four pieces of silver to the poor
 “ woman, and withdrew in anger. In a little
 “ time after, the ewe yeaned her first lamb :
 “ Aaron returned, and said, My good woman,
 “ it is written that the firstling of every beast is
 “ the Lord’s. He carried off the lamb and eat
 “ it. Korah remonstrated again, but to as little
 “ purpose as before.

“ The widow in despair killed her ewe, and
 “ immediately Aaron was with her, and took
 “ the shoulder, the leg, and the loin. Korah
 “ was enraged, but Aaron said that it was so
 “ written, and that he would eat the shoulder,
 “ the leg, and the loin. The widow was pro-
 “ voked, and in a passion swore, the Devil take
 “ my ewe ; which Aaron hearing, he returned,
 “ and said, that whatever is cursed is the Lord’s,
 “ and he eat the rest of the poor ewe for his
 “ supper. Such is the cause of the quarrel be-
 “ tween Aaron on the one part, Korah, Dathan,
 “ and Abiram, on the other.”

This malicious piece of humour has been co-
 pied by more than one nation. There is not a
 single good fable in Fontaine that does not come
 from the heart of Asia : you will even find them
 among the Tartars. I recollect to have formerly
 read in Plancarpin’s, Rubruqui’s, and Marc Pa-
 olo’s Collection of Voyages, that a Tartar Chief,
 when he was dying, repeated to his children the
 fable of the old man, who gave his sons the bun-
 dle of rods to break.*

K

Have

* Voyages of Plancarpin, Rubruquis, Marc Paul
 and Haiton, chap. xvii. of Haiton, page 31.

Have we a more philosophic tale in the west, than that which Olearius relates of Alexander? I mentioned it in one of the pamphlets which I did not send to you, because it was not worth carriage. The scene is in the most distant parts of Baſſariana, at a time when all the Asiatic Princes sought the waters of immortality, as the Knights errant, in our modern romances, have sought after the waters of youth. Alexander met an angel in the cavern, where the magi assured him, that the waters of immortality were to be had. The angel gave him a flint, and bidding him bring another of the same form and weight, he should then drink of the water of immortality. Alexander searched himself, and caused search to be made every where to no purpose. After a deal of fruitless labour, he thought proper to choose a flint nearly resembling the one he had received, and added a little earth to give it the weight and form. The angel Gabriel, perceiving the trick, said to him, *My friend, remember that thou art only earth. Despair of drinking the waters of immortality; and do not attempt to impose upon Ga'riel.*†

This apologue teaches us that there are not two things in nature to be found perfectly alike; and that the ideas of Leibnitz upon *the indiscernible*, were known in the heart of Tartary a long time before Leibnitz.‡

For the most part of the stories with which we have been crammed over and over again, and all

† Olearius, page 169.

‡ This History has been introduced into a little book, entitled, Chinese, Indian, and Tartar letters.

all the witty repartees which have been ascribed to Charles V. Henry IV. and an hundred modern Princes, they may be found in Atheneus, and our old books. It is in that sense only that we can say, *nihil sub sole novum*, (*there is nothing new under the sun*) &c.

L E T T E R XXIII.

To Mr. DE CHABAN, upon Pindar and Horace.

Ferney, March 9, 1772.

My dear Friend,

YOU have made me a very handsome present. By making Pindar known, you will do a great service to letters. Your translation is noble and elegant: your notes are very instructive. I own to you that I am vexed to see Pindar so frequently cutting his words in two, to put one half at the end of one verse, and the other half at the beginning of the next.

I know you will tell me that it was done for sake of the music; but I am not the less astonished to see in the first strophe,

Χρυσια φορμιξ Απολλο—
νος. Και ιοπλοκαμον.

Would you put in an Opera
Golden lyre of Apollo,
and his violet hair?

K 2

What

What do you say of

Ἀμφὶ τὴ Λα-
τονα

The son of La-
tona ?

I should think that the Greeks might have made music without such strange medley. The Odes of Anacreon were sung, yet Anacreon never thought of cutting his words in two.

It is said that the Rhapsodists sung Homer's verses ; there is not a single verse in Homer cut like those in Pindar.

What seems very strange to me is to see in Horace,

Jove non probante ux-
orius amnis.

Jove disapproving the ux-
orius River.

He frequently takes this liberty ; but there is no finding fault with a method which Horace has adopted. All that we can say is, that the French would laugh at us if we were to take the same liberties which Pindar and Horace have taken, except Chapelle, who takes the same liberty currently.

However, I much doubt if all the Odes of Horace were sung. Do you imagine that the Roman ladies, and men of fashion, had a great deal of pleasure in singing at table this song,

Perficos

Perſicos odi? of which Dacier has given the following tranſlation :

“ I am not for the Perſian magnificence. I
 “ cannot even endure the crowns which are
 “ bound with little bands of the Linden tree.
 “ Cease to enquire after late blowing roſes. I
 “ only aſk for crowns of ſimple myrtle, with-
 “ out their being made up in any other form.
 “ The myrtle ſuits a lacquey like thee, and is
 “ not improper for me, while I drink under the
 “ ſhade of an arbour.”

I likewiſe very much doubt, if the good company in Rome joined in ſinging the chorus where Horace abuſes the forcerer Canidia, and ſome other old women, for their horrid practices.

A number of the learned alledge, that three-fourths of the Odes of Horace were not made to be ſung : but an ode is a ſong ; and what is a ſong that cannot be ſung ? We are told that it is the univerſal practice all over Europe to make ſtan-
 zas in rhyme which are never ſung. But the lovers of muſic ſay, that it is the remains of barbariſm.

The Abbé Terraffon aſked to what tune Moſes ſung the famous ſong at coming out of the Red Sea : *Let us ſing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriouſly.*

I muſt have a little ſcolding with you about your preliminary diſcourſe, which appears to me to be excellent. You call Cowley the Eng-
 liſh

lish Pindar. You do him a great deal of honour. He was a poet without harmony, who endeavoured to be witty upon all occasions. Dryden the author of that beautiful Ode, entitled *Alexander's Feast*; or, *Alexander and Timotheus*, is the true Pindar. That Ode, set to music, by Purcel, (if I am not mistaken) passes in England for a most sublime and most varied masterpiece of poetry: and I own to you, that as I understand the English better than Greek, I love this ode a hundred times better than all Pindar. If it is not blasphemy against Hieron, the first violin to the King of Sicily; I wish only to know whether his Odes are sung in parts. It is probable that the Greeks understood this harmony, which we so impudently deny. Plato expressly says so, in explicit terms.

Pardon me for making a display of my learning with you.

L E T T E R XXIV.

TO a CELEBRATED ACTRESS.

IT is very true, Mademoiselle, that the charming Mrs. Oldfield, the best actress on the English stage, had a monument erected for her in Westminster Abbey, along with the Kings and Heroes of that country, and even with the great Newton. It is likewise true, that Mademoiselle Couvreur, the first actress in France in her days, was carried in a hackney coach to the corner of Bourgogne street, which was not at
that

that time paved, and was buried by a Porter, and had no monument erected for her. There are examples of every thing in this world. The English have instituted an annual festival in honour of their famous comedian and poet Shakspeare. We have not the festival of Moliere with us. Louis XIV. when at the summit of all his greatness, danced with the Opera Dancers before all Paris at his return from the famous campaign of 1672. If the Archbishop of Paris had made the same attempt, he would not have been so well received, though he had danced the best minuet in Europe.

About the beginning of the sixteenth century, thanks to the taste of Pope Leo X. and the genius of the Prelates Babiena, la Casa, and Trissino, Italy saw Tragedy and Comedy revived. Cardinal Richlieu had the Hall of the Royal Palace built to have his pieces, and those of his five young poets, played there. Two Bishops, by his orders, did the honours on the occasion, and presented the ladies with refreshments between the acts.

We are indebted to Cardinal Mazarin for the opera: but see how all things change. The Cardinals Dubois and Fleury, were both Prime Ministers, yet we are not obliged to them even for a farce at the fair. We are become more regular, our manners are undoubtedly more severe. It was suspected that the Jansenists had armed the hands of the church against shows, that they might have the pleasure of falling upon

upon the Jesuits, who had tragedies and comedies performed by their students, imagining these exercises to be among the first requisites in a good education. It is even alledged that the Jesuits were so intimidated, that they left off these entertainments some time before the society were abolished in France.

You have undoubtedly heard from the learned who come to visit you, that the contrary happened among the Greek and Romans, our masters. The money destined for the support of the theatre of Athens was held sacred. It was not even allowed to be touched on the most pressing necessities, and in the greatest dangers of war.

They did what was still more in ancient Rome. The city was laid waste by the plague towards the three hundred and ninetieth year from the time of its foundation; and it was necessary to appease the Gods by the most sacred ceremonies. But what did the Senate do? They gave orders for a comedy to be played, and the plague ceased. A good Physician will not be surpris'd at this, he knows that reasonable pleasures are good for health.

Unfortunately we neither resemble the Greeks nor the ancient Romans. It is true that there are many agreeable Frenchmen in France; but there are likewise Welch, who do not look upon a comedy as a specific if they were attacked by the plague. For my part I could pass my life in hearing you, or may the plague choak me. I own that the contradictions which divide the
wits

wits on the subject of your profession, are without number; but you know that without a difference in opinions, conversation could not be kept up. But there is no difference of opinion among those who live with you: they all concur in the sentiments of esteem and friendship which they owe you.

L E T T E R XXV.

Answer to the Abbé BERTINELLI, of Verona.

(This Letter is old.)

IF I was younger, and if I could have constrained myself, I should certainly have seen Rome, Venice, and your Verona: but English and Swiss liberty has been so much my delight, that I could not venture to go to your country to see the brothers of the Inquisition, at least not before I am the strongest. And as there is no appearance that I shall ever be a general of an army, or an ambassador, you will think it is but right that I do not go into a country where the books which a poor traveller carries in his cloak-bag are seized at the gates of the towns. I am not at all desirous of asking leave of a Dominican to speak, think, or read; and I ingenuously tell you, that this Italian slavery makes me tremble. I believe St. Peter's at Rome to be very fine; but I would rather have one good English book, written with freedom, than a thousand pillars of marble. I do not know

what kind of liberty you will speak to me of at *Monte Baldo*; but I very much love that which Horace speaks of *fari quæ sentiat*. It is that which I have attained, after searching my whole life. The happiness which I have procured for myself is doubled by a commerce with you. I shall receive with the most grateful acknowledgments the information which you are so kind as to promise me upon the subject of the ancient Italian literature.

I think it required an extraordinary degree of courage to call Danté a fool, and his work a monster: however even in that monster, there are fifty verses superior to the age in which he lived, and which I love better than all the little worms called *Sonetti*, which spring up and die by thousands a day in Italy, from Milan to Otranto.

Algarotti then, like *Læpidus*, has abandoned the triumvirate: I believe at bottom he thinks as you do of *Danté*. It is pleasant enough to think that a man dare not speak his mind even upon trifles but in the ear of his friend. This world is a wretched masquerade. I know perfectly how they can dissemble who want to be Cardinals or Popes; but I cannot conceive a reason for their dissembling in other matters. What makes me love England is, there are no hypocrites there of any kind. I brought England home with me; at the same time I love the Italians infinitely, but more particularly you, Sir, whose genius and character is suited to
 please

please all nations, and who deserves to be free as I am.

As for that wag *Marrini*, who has just printed Danté at Paris in a collection of Italian poets, he is a merchant who has set up a shop, and sells his commodity. He speaks ill both of Bayle and me; and the preferring Virgil to Danté is charged as a crime. This poor wretch may well talk; Danté may get admittance into the libraries of the curious, but he will never be read. I have always had volumes of Ariosto stolen from me, but never one of Danté.

I pray you give Signor Marrini to the devil and all his hell, with the panther, lioness, and the wolf which Danté met in his way. Beg pardon of Virgil for a poet of his own country having placed himself in such bad company. They who have the least spark of good sense should blush at this strange assemblage in hell of Danté, Virgil, St. Peter, and the Madona Beatrice. There are people to be found even in this eighteenth century, who endeavour to admire such wild and extravagant imaginations; and who have the stupidity to set them up in opposition to the most masterly works of genius, wisdom, and eloquence that we have in our language. *O tempora! O judicium!*

LETTER XXVI.

Answer to METAPHYSICAL QUESTIONS.

S I R,

THE recluse to whom you have written, frequently receives letters from *literati*, or their admirers, whom he has not the honour to know. These letters are seldom worth the trouble of answering, but most assuredly yours are not of that kind; what you write breathes the soundest metaphysics, and shews that if you have taken nothing from books, that you are very capable of making an excellent one yourself, which is very uncommon, especially on such a subject.

Liberty, as it is understood by many schoolmen, is in fact an absurd chimera. If they will pay the least attention to reason, and not be satisfied with mere words, it will be evident, that whatever exists, or is self-created, is necessary; for if it was not necessary, it would be useless. The respectable sect of stoics thought so; and what is very singular, this truth may be found in a hundred places in Homer, who makes Jupiter submit to fate.

There exists a something, which must be eternal, as it is demonstrated, otherwise we should have an effect without a cause. Thus all the ancients, without a single exception, believed matter to be eternal.

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It is not the same of immensity, nor of an almighty power. I cannot see the necessity of all space being filled; and I do not comprehend the reasoning of Clarke, who says, *that whatever necessarily exists in one place, ought necessarily to exist in every place.* I think some very good objections have been made to this, and his answers are exceeding weak. Wherefore is it impossible that there should be more than a determined quantity of beings? I can much easier conceive a bounded nature, than an infinite nature.

Upon this article I can only have probabilities, and I can only submit to the strongest. By the universal agreement in every thing which I know of nature, I perceive a design; this design shews that there must be a first cause; that first cause is undoubtedly very powerful; but simple philosophy does not teach me to believe that this great artist is infinitely powerful. A house forty feet high proves to me that there must have been an architect; but reason alone cannot convince me that this architect could build a house ten thousand leagues high. Perhaps his powers did not admit of his building one more than forty feet high. My reason alone does not tell me, that in the immensity of space there is but one architect; and if a man was to alledge that there was a great many similar architects, I do not see how I could convince him of the contrary.

Metaphysics is the field of doubts, and the romance of the soul. We know that more than
one

one learned Doctor has spoke nonsense to us, but we have only a few truths to substitute in the room of their numberless errors. We swim in uncertainty, and have very few distinct ideas; and it must be so, since we are animals only five feet and a half high, with brains about four inches square. My brain, Sir, is the most humble servant of yours.

LETTER XXVII.

On the pretended letters of Pope GANGANELLI
CLEMENT XIV.

2d May, 1776.

I HAVE been so abused, my dear friend, with my ingenious and gallant letters, which I never wrote, and with so many other stupidities which have been ascribed to me, that you will pardon me for taking the part of every Cardinal or Pope to whom such tricks are played.

It is a long time since I was provoked with that political testament which was fraudently produced in the name of Cardinal Richlieu. Can we give attention to the political advice of a Prime Minister who does not speak to the King; either of the Queen, whose situation was so doubtful; nor of his brother, who had so often conspired against him; nor of his son, the Dauphin, whose education was of such importance; nor of his enemies, against whom he had such measures to take; nor of the protestants
of

of the kingdom, against whom that same King had carried on so severe a war; nor of his armies; nor of his negotiations; nor of his Generals; nor of his Ambassadors? It would be madness and folly to believe that this rhapsody was written by a Minister of State.

The most ill-conceived frauds are discoverable in every page; however, the name of Cardinal Richlieu imposed for a time; and even some of the *beaux-esprits*, like oracles, praised the horrid errors with which the book swarms: and thus every error is propagated from one end of the world to the other, unless some worthy soul has courage enough to stop its career.

Since that time we have had the testaments of the Duke of Lorraine, Colbert, Louvois, Alberoni, Marechal Bellisle, and Mandrin. Among so many heroes I dare not rank myself; but you know that Counsellor Marchand has made my testament, in which he has had the discretion not even to include a legacy for himself.

You have seen the letters of Ninon de l'Enclos, the Queen of Sweden, Madame Pompadour, Mademoiselle de Tron to her lover, the Reverend Father de la Chaize, confessor to Louis XIV. and now come the letters of Pope Ganganelli. They are in French, though he never wrote in that language. Ganganelli must have received incognito the gift of languages in the course of his life. These letters are entirely
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in the French taste. The turn of the expressions, the thoughts, the words, the style is entirely French. They are printed in France; the editor is a Frenchman, born near Tours, who has assumed a name beginning with a J. and has already published a number of French works under feigned names.

If this editor had translated genuine letters of Pope Clement XIV. into French, he would have deposited the originals in some public library. We have a right to say to him what was formerly said to the Abbé Nodot, "Shew us your manuscript of Petronius, which was found at Belgrade, or consent that nobody shall believe you. It is as false that you have the genuine satire of Petronius in your hands, as it is false that that ancient satire was the work of a Consul, and a picture of Nero's conduct. Desist from attempting to deceive the learned, you will only deceive the vulgar."

When the comedy of the Scotchwoman was published in the name of Guillaume Vade, and of Jerome Carré, the public immediately saw the joke, and did not require legal proofs. But when they expose the name of a Pope, whose ashes are not yet cold, there should be no room left for suspicion; the letters with Ganganelli's subscription should be produced in the sacred college, and deposited in the library of the Vatican, with the attestations of all who know his writing; otherwise it will be said all over Europe, that a man has dared to take the name of
a Pope

a Pope to sell a book. *Reus est quia filium dei se fecit.*

As for my part, if I were to see these letters supported by attestations, I would no more believe them to be the letters of Ganganelli, than I should believe the letters of Pilate to Tiberius were really written by Pilate.

And why am I so incredulous about these letters? It is because I have read them; because I see the counterfeit in every page. I was sufficiently intimate with the Venetian Algarotti to know that he never had the least correspondence with the Friar Ganganelli, nor with the Counsellor Ganganelli, nor with the Cardinal Ganganelli, nor with the Pope Ganganelli. The little advice given in a friendly manner to Algarotti and me, were never given by that good Monk, who became a good Pope.

It is impossible that Ganganelli could have written to Mr. Stuart, a Scotchman; *my dear Sir, I am sincerely attached to the English nation. I have an excessive love for your great poets.*

What would you say of an Italian who declares to a Scotchman, *that he has an excessive love for English verse*, and yet does not understand one word of English?

The Editor goes still farther, and makes his learned Ganganelli say, "I sometimes make nocturnal visits to Newton, and at a time when all nature sleeps, I wake to read and
"admire

“admire him. No one like him ever united
 “simplicity with science. His character and
 “genius were superior to pride.”

You see how the Editor puts himself in the place of his pope, and what strange praise he bestows upon Newton. He pretends to have read him, and speaks of him as of a learned Benedictine, well versed in history, and who is, notwithstanding, very modest. A very pretty panegyric on the greatest mathematician that has ever been: a man who has dissected the light.

In that same letter he takes Berkley, Bishop of Cloyne, for one of those who have written against the Christian Religion, and ranks him with Spinoza and Bayle. He does not know that Berkley was one of the most able writers who has defended the Christian Religion. He does not know that Spinoza has never once mentioned it, and that Bayle has not written any work expressly on so respectable a subject.

The Editor, in a letter to an Abbé Lami, makes his pretended Ganganelli say, *that according to Danté the soul is the greatest miracle in the world.* A Pope or a Franciscan Friar may cite Danté with all his might, to shew himself a man of letters; but there is not a single verse in that strange Poet Danté, which says what is here ascribed to him.

In another letter to a venetian lady, Ganganelli amuses himself in refuting Locke; that is to say,
 Mr.

Mr. Editor, much superior to Locke, does himself the pleasure of censuring him under the name of a Pope.

In a letter to Cardinal Quirini, the Editor expresses himself in the following manner:
 “ Your Eminency, who loves the French, has
 “ certainly looked with a forgiving eye upon
 “ their prettiness, though it might have offend-
 “ ed the superior taste of the ancient manners.
 “ There is no evil but may be found collectively
 “ in all ages ; there are sparks and flames, lilies
 “ and blue-bottles, rains and dews, stars and
 “ meteors, rivers and rivulets, which is a per-
 “ fect picture of nature ; and to judge of the
 “ world and of times, you must unite the dif-
 “ ferent views, and make but one piece of the
 “ whole.

Do you in good faith believe that the Pope wrote this farrago in French against the French?

Is it not pleasant in the hundred and eleventh letter of Ganganelli, newly become Cardinal, he says, “ We are not Cardinals to impose upon
 “ the world by haughtiness, but to be the pil-
 “ lars of the Holy See. Our rank, our habits,
 “ our functions, all remind us, that, even to
 “ the effusion of our blood, we ought to em-
 “ ploy all our power for the assistance of re-
 “ ligion, according to the will of God and the
 “ exigencies of the Church. When I see Car-
 “ dinal de Tournon flying to the extremities of
 “ the world to cause the truth to be preached
 “ there in its purity, I find myself inflamed
 “ with

“ with the noble example, and am disposed to
 “ undertake every thing in the same cause.”

Would you not imagine from this passage, that a Cardinal de Tournon had forsaken the pleasures of Rome in the year 1706, to go and preach to the Emperor of China, and to suffer martyrdom? But the real fact is, a Savoyard Priest of the name of *Maillard*, who was educated at Rome in the college of the *Propaganda*, was sent by Pope Clement XI. to China in the year 1706, to give an account to the congregation of the Propaganda, of a dispute between the Jacobins and the Jesuits about the meaning of two words in the Chinese language. Maillard took the name of Tournon, and very soon was appointed Apostolical Vicar in China. He was no sooner Apostle Vicar, than he took it into his head that he understood the Chinese language better than the Emperor Camhy. He sent word to Pope Clement XI. that the Emperor and the Jesuits were Heretics. The Emperor was satisfied with sending him to prison, but it is said that the Jesuits had him poisoned: but before the poison had operated, it is said that he had the credit to procure a cap from the Pope. The Chinese scarcely knew what was meant by the cap, but Maillard died when the cap arrived: and this is the faithful history of that conceit. The Editor supposes Ganganelli was so ignorant as to know nothing.

Lastly, he who borrows the name of Pope Ganganelli, pushes his zeal so far as to make him say in his fifty-eighth letter to a Magistrate of the Republic of St. Marino, “ I will not send you the book you want to see; it is an ill-formed production,

duction, badly translated from the French, and abounds with heresies against morality and sound doctrine. It speaks, nevertheless, of *humanity*; for now-a-days that is the plausible phrase which is substituted in the room of *charity*, because humanity is but a Pagan virtue, and charity is a Christian one. The modern philosophy would have nothing to do with what relates to Christianity."

You will attentively observe, that if our Pope dreads the word humanity, his most Christian Majesty boldly makes use of it in his edict of the 12th of April, 1776, in which he offers medicines to be distributed, gratis, to all the sick in his kingdom. The edict begins thus: *His Majesty's will is, henceforth for the sake of humanity, &c.*

Mr. Editor may be inhuman as much as he pleases upon paper, but he will please to allow that our Kings and Ministers may be humane. It is plain that he is strangely mistaken, but it is the case with all these gentlemen who publish their productions in respectable names. It is the rock upon which all the Testament-makers have split; it is by this chiefly that Boisguilbert is known, who dared to print his *Royal Tenth* under the name of the Marechal de Vauban. Such were the authors of the Memoirs of Vordac, Montbrun, de Pontis, and many more.

I believe the pretended Ganganelli is unmasked. He made himself Pope, but 'tis I that have deposed

posed him. If he will excommunicate me for it, he is very welcome.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Upon A N E C D O T E S.

IT is true, Sir, that there is no great harm in ascribing letters to Pope Ganganelli and Queen Christina of Sweden, which neither the one nor the other did write. It is a long time since quacks began to deceive the world for money. The world should be pretty well acquainted with it, since that grave historian, Flavius Josephus, hath certified, that a beautiful writing of the son of Seth, who was the grandson of Adam, upon astrology, was to be seen in his time: that one part of the book was engraved upon a pillar of stone, to resist water when the human race were to be destroyed by a deluge; and another part upon a pillar of brick, to resist fire, when the general conflagration should destroy the world. No writing can give an earlier date to falsities. I think it was the Abbé Tilladet who said, “As soon as any thing is printed, tho’ you have not read it, lay a wager it is not true; I will go your halves, and it will make my fortune.”

What would you have us think of the innumerable libels and court satires which have amused and plagued France from the time of the *League* to the *Fronde*; and from the *Fronde* down
to

to our days. It is still worse with our neighbours; for a hundred years past, one half of England has been writing against the other.

A Methusalem who would pass his whole life in reading, could not have time to glance over a hundredth part of these stupid impertinencies. They all fall into contempt, but not into oblivion. You will find curious people, who collect heaps of this old rubbish, and believe they have monuments of history, as we see others, who forming cabinets of butterflies and caterpillars, think themselves Plinys.

What facts can we get information of in the history of this world? Great public events which nobody ever doubted. Cæsar was conqueror at Pharsalia, and was afterwards stabbed in the Senate. Mahomet II. took Constantinople. One half of the citizens of Paris massacred the other on the night of St. Bartholomew. There is no doubting these things; but who can penetrate thro' the detail of them? The prevailing colour may be seen at a distance, but the shadings unavoidably escape our notice.

Would you believe every thing which Tacitus says because his style pleases and captivates you? But because one can please, it does not necessarily follow that he must always have spoken the truth. You are a little mischievous, and you chuse an author who is more wicked than you are. It was very well in Tacitus to tell us at the beginning of his history, that flattery and satire should be both avoided; and that he neither
loves

loves nor hates the Emperors he speaks of. I would answer, you do hate them, because you was born a Roman and they were Sovereigns; you would have mankind hate them even in their most indifferent actions.

I do not pretend to justify Domitian to you or any one; but why do you seem to make it a crime in that Emperor, the sending frequent messengers to be informed of the state of health of your father in law, Agricola, during his last illness? Wherefore does this proof of friendship, or at least of attention, appear to you to proceed from a secret desire of rejoicing as soon as possible at the death of Agricola? I could oppose to the dreadful picture which you have drawn of Tiberius, and the horrid deeds which you ascribe to him, the praises bestowed upon him by the Jew Philon, who was a still greater enemy to the Roman Emperors than you. I could, even while I abhor Nero as much as you can do, puzzle you about the scheme which was a long time prosecuted, for killing his mother Agrippina, and especially about the vessel which was invented for the purpose of drowning her. I would shew you my reasons for doubting of Agrippina's endeavouring to engage her son in incest at the very time that Nero was preparing to assassinate her. But I am not bold enough to lessen the crimes of Nero, and to dispute against Tacitus.

It is enough for me, Sir, to say, that if there is so much reason for doubting in the histories of the first of the Roman Emperors, written by so many of their illustrious contemporaries, there

is still much greater reason for doubting what has been written by illiterate barbarians about people still more barbarous and ignorant than themselves.

Tell me how it comes about that the Asiatic balderdash upon astrology, alchymy, the medicine of body and soul, has gone round the world and governed it.

L E T T E R XXIX.

TO THE SAME.

On the story of the famous Coachman GILBERT.

YOU must remember, Sir, the famous trial of the Field Marechal Count de Morangies, which gave you so much trouble, and that contemptible and dreadful cabal which broke out against him. You remember a hackney coachman of the name of *Gilbert*, who headed this gang, with an old clerk of an attorney called *Abriot*, who was at that time in a salivation. They led the populace like hounds, and seduced the minds of the multitude. The coachman Gilbert had seen his intimate friend Liegard Dujonquay, who could neither read nor write, admitted a Doctor of Laws, living in an unfurnished barn, and ready to purchase the place of a Counsellor of the Parliament. He had seen him in his barn, counting a hundred thousand crowns in gold; he had assisted the Doctor of Laws to place this money in order, and then to put it in

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bags.

bags. He had seen this young magistrate carry this hundred thousand crowns at thirteen different journies on foot to the Count de Morangies, and loaded with gold, run the space of six leagues in three hours.

The attorney's clerk, his body full of mercury, and covered from head to foot with ulcers and ointments, escaped from his surgeon at the risk of his life, to see this worthy course of the Olympic games, in company with Gilbert.

All the blackguards and all the attorney's clerks joined the rest of the madmen, and called God to witness in favour of Dujonquay: next to God they called the coachman, and the poxed clerk of the attorney. - It was said that these two witnesses could neither be deceived themselves, nor deceive others. They had seen, and gave evidence according to conscience. The cause of the magistrate Dujonquay was so just, his right so clear, that an usurer called *Aucour* purchased the action and carried it on in his name, as an old cloaths-man would buy a birth-day suit to sell again.

In vain did Mr. de Sartines, who was Lieutenant General of the Police, assisted by the Judge in criminal matters, begin prudently to check the absurd and criminal designs of Dujonquay and his accomplices; when the people cried out that they were Pilates oppressing the innocent. They who stirred up the mob had it written in their memorials, that the commandments of God were
of

of no weight with Field Marechals; that every man of rank was consequently a knave, and that there was no honesty but in barns, with hackney coachmen, and attorneys clerks, who were attacked with that disorder which Don Calmet ascribes to the holy man Job. The voice of the people is the voice of God. This voice was so strong and loud, that the suit was immediately remitted by the Parliament to the jurisdiction of the inferior court, to be judged in the first instance. This petty court put the Count de Morangies in prison, condemned him to restore a hundred thousand crowns which he could never have received, and adjudged three thousand six hundred livres to the generous coachman, as a reward for his honesty.

The Parliament had much-ado to repair the horror and ridicule of this sentence. The cabal accused the Parliament of being a cabal. Counsellors continued to write cases, declaring that the Field Marechal had bribed the Parliament, the Chatelet, and the Police. One of the defenders of Gilbert the coachman declared in his memorial, that the presence of the honest coachman made the Judge who examined him tremble, and that he was another Cato, whom the satellite of a tyrant were dragging to prison.

At last, Sir, I heard from Paris that this Gilbert, this Cato of hackney coachmen, after having frequently escaped the halter, was caught in a flagrant crime, and was found guilty of being a thief and a forger. I do not know if the cabal will save him from a capital punishment, but I know

know that when a beggarly rascal gets to be a leader of the mob, the consequences are not always brought to an end by the death of the principal. A single enthusiast is enough to re-kindle his ashes. If justice should condemn the coachman, Gilbert, to be hanged, fanaticism will sound his praise at the foot of the gallows. Gilbert will be invoked as a martyr of the people sacrificed to the Court; and who knows to what length this humour may go?

There is a story told of an Irish priest *who lived at Paris upon disputes and masses*, that happened to put a gold chalice which belonged to one of the royal chapels in his pocket one day by mistake. When he was going to be executed, one of his companions, with a true Irish brogue, cried out to the people, see here, how they behave to good *Catholics*. This single word occasioned a sedition. I cannot vouch for this story, for of a thousand which I hear, I can scarce believe one.

If you ask me how it happened, in an age so enlightened, that a great part of the public were so wicked and foolish as to support the despicable cause of those raggamuffins who accused the Count de Morangies? I will answer you, that in these days we see no more of these criminal proceedings, which were like fields of butchery; such as that when the Templars were condemned to be burnt alive as apostates, after having fought three-score years for the faith; such as that of a Prince of Armagnac, whose blood was spilt drop by drop on the heads of his children, by the executioner of Louis XI. or that of the Count de Montecuculi,

Montecuculi, who was quartered in the time of Francis I. because the Dauphin had drank imprudently of ice; or of the Counsellor du Bourg, who was hanged for having recommended toleration; or of one Ramus, whose bloody carcase was dragged to the gates of all the colleges, to make the *amende honorable*, to the quiddities of Aristotle; or of a Marechal de Marillac, who was carried to the place of execution in a sledge, because his brother had displeased the Minister, &c. &c. &c. It must be owned, that within these few years we have seen some cruel, absurd, and execrable examples, but they are not so common as they were formerly. France and all Europe have witnessed them with horror. Our ancestors for a dozen ages looked with eyes of indifference upon an uninterrupted train of public abominations: but now-a-days the voice of wisdom seems to have checked its course. But who knows if the voice of the just and wise, which are the same, will be able to overcome the bellowings of perverse fanatics.

L E T T E R XXX.

To the Abbé SPALANZANI.

Ferney, 6th June, 1776.

S I R,

YOUR letter of the 31st of May revives my former taste, and my former hopes. I had renounced the honour of restoring heads to snails. I had the modesty to believe that I was not worthy of being a worker of miracles. However I perfectly remember to have seen heads produced upon those slugs which I had beheaded; but some good naturalists told me that I was awkward, and had only cut off the skins of their faces, which soon grew again: but since you assure me that you have cut off real heads, and that they are grown again, *io ripiglio la mia confidenza*; and I begin once more to think nature is capable of every thing.

What you tell me of animals that have been a long time dead and restored to life, is certainly a much greater miracle. You are believed to be the best observer in Europe. All your experiments have been made with most profound judgment. When such a man as you has declared that he has raised the dead, he must be believed.

I do not know what the *Cotifero* and the *Tardi grado* are, nor what name our naturalists give to these small aquatic animals, which you certainly kill by bringing them upon dry land, and after a considerable

considerable time restore them to life by plunging them again into their natural element.

After having made such wonderful experiments, you condescend to ask my opinion about the souls of the *Cotifero* and the *Tardi grado*. What becomes of their souls? Are they immaterial? Do they grow again? Or do they take another?

I am distressed, Sir, about every soul, and my own among the rest. But I have been a great while persuaded of the immense and unknown power of the author of nature. I have always believed that he can bestow the faculty of having sentiments, ideas, and memory, upon whatever beings he thinks proper; that he can take away these faculties and restore them again; and that we have often taken for a substance what in fact was only a faculty of that substance. Attraction and gravitation are qualities; they are faculties. There is both in the animal and vegetable kingdoms a thousand similar springs, whose energy we are sensible of, but we must remain for ever ignorant of the cause.

If the *Cotifero* and *Tardi grado*, after being dead and rotten, resume their motions, their sensations, engender, eat and digest, we can no more know how nature has restored to them these faculties, than we can know how she first bestowed them, for the one is not more incomprehensible than the other. I own I shall be curious to know the reasons why the great Being, who is the author of all, who gives us life, and deprives us of it, hath granted the faculty of returning to life, only to the

the *Cotifero* and *Tardi gradi*. The whales should be very jealous of these little fresh-water fish.

If any one has a right to explain this mystery, Sir, it is you. It would be well to know likewise, if these little animals that come to life a number of times, do not at last die in earnest; and how many resurrections they can depend upon.

It was probably from them that the Greeks formerly were made acquainted with the resurrection of Athalida, Pelops, Hippolitus, Alcestes, and Pyrihous. It is a pity that the secret should be lost. I believe it is that great observer, Bonnet, who maintains, that we shall rise again with our upper, but without our lower extremities. There is the end of the end, &c.

L E T T E R XXXI.

To Mr. B

Of the Academy of Sciences, and Author of a book full of Genius and Science upon the Astronomy of the Antients.

S I R,

YOU do as the Missionaries do who go to convert people in far distant countries. When once they have convinced a poor Indian of the creation *ex nihilo*, they lead him gradually to all the other sublime truths, with which he is astonished.

nished. You are not satisfied with having instructed me in truths which have been long concealed; you would likewise persuade me that there were a people formerly, but now lost, who understood astronomy, and taught the surrounding nations before they left the world. You have staggered and almost converted me.

At first I was struck with your ingenious and even plausible conjecture, that astronomy was first discovered in that climate where the longest day is sixteen hours, and the shortest only eight: but my partiality for the antient Brachmans, the masters of Pythagoras, has a little withheld me.

It is a long time since I read Bernier. He has neither your knowledge, sagacity, nor style. He seems to me to speak of the antient Indian philosophy, as an Indian would speak of ours if he had never conversed with any but our Undergraduates, instead of being informed by such men as you. Bernier, you say, made a short voyage to Benares; I allow it; but pray did he converse with the few Bramins who understand the Shasta language? Two of the Council of the English East-India Company of Calcutta, a little way from Benares, assured me some years ago, that the truly learned Bramins almost never held any correspondence with foreigners: and Mr. le Gentil, who knows more of the matter than they do, owns that the smatterers in the province next to Pondicherry, have the same contempt for us with which their ancestors honoured the Portuguese.

If a Hindou was to come to Paris or Rome, to hear a Professor of the Propaganda, or the College of Cholets, and was to judge of us by these animals, would he not take us all for fools and simpletons?

However, Sir, it seems very extraordinary to me, that a people who had certainly studied mathematics for five thousand years, should sink into that stupidity which Bernier and other travellers impute to them. How can we think that in the same town where geometry and astronomy were invented, they believe that the moon is fifty thousand leagues beyond the sun? Such a contrast distresses me; but the adventure of Galileo and his Judges distresses me still more, and I say to myself like Harlequin, *Tutto il mondo e fatto come la nostra famiglia.*

I then fancy to myself, that a nation may have been formerly well instructed, very industrious, and most respectable, and yet in these days very ignorant in many respects, and perhaps even contemptible, although they may have many more schools than they had formerly. If you was to go now a days to the Sacred College, and propose to them to build a *Quinquirem* (a vessel with five banks of oars) I question if you would be as well served as in the time of Augustus. The Tartar government may have produced as wonderful changes in India, as the two keys of St. Peter have done at Rome.

I must make my compleat confession to you. I observed, that our people in the Temperate Zone
did

did not imagine formerly that the earth was inhabited beyond the fiftieth degree of North latitude; and I respected our Brachmans, who were capable of discovering that the longest day in summer was double of the shortest day in winter, and I pardoned the Greeks for having placed the greatest darkness about the fiftieth degree.

Lastly, Sir, I must in a particular manner beg your pardon, if the weakness of my organs is such as not to admit of my believing that astronomy was first discovered among the Usbecks and the Calmucks. I have for almost fourscore years inhabited a climate covered with snow and hoar frost for six months in the year at least; our summers seldom giving us fine days, and never clear nights. I have had a most agreeable Tartar for a long time with me, who was sent to me by the Empress of Russia. He tells that Mount Caucasus is not more agreeable than Mount Jura: and I imagine that they cannot easily be tempted to observe the stars carefully who live under such a cloudy sky, especially if they are not provided with every necessary.

It is true that the Abbé Chappe observed the transit of Venus over the Sun at Tobolsky about the fifty-eighth degree, in the coldest country and most cloudy sky: but he was provided with all the science of Europe, the best instruments, and a robust constitution. However, he did not long survive the fatigue.

I have been always convinced that astronomy must have had its origin in the country where they
have

have the finest nights. The idea of our poor globe having been formerly warmer than it is at present, and that it grows gradually colder has made little impression upon me. I have never read Mfr. Mairan's central fire; and since we no longer believe in Tartarus and Phlegethon, it appears to me that the central fire will gain no great degree of credit.

The fable of the Phenix does not appear to me to have been invented by an inhabitant of Mount Caucasus. But after all, Sir, your system seems to be supported by such amazing erudition, and extraordinary probability, that I will cheerfully sacrifice my doubts to your very great learning.

I am not worthy of being admitted into one of these ancient heavens you speak so well of, but I beg of you to grant me a place in the forty-ninth degree.

F I N I S

